

# MODERN LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

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June, 1959

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PHIL WITHIM. <i>'Billy Budd': Testament of Acceptance</i>	115
J. BURKE SEVERS. Keats's <i>"Mansion of Many Apartments," "Sleep and Poetry," and "Tintern Abbey"</i>	128
CLAUDE E. JONES. <i>Dramatic Criticism in the "Critical Review," 1756-1785 (Part II)</i>	133
PAUL A. BROWN. <i>A Bibliography of Critical Arthurian Literature for the Year 1958</i>	145
WILLIAM H. REY. <i>A Tragic View of Thomas Mann</i>	167
EDSON M. CHICK. <i>Comic and Grotesque Elements in Ernst Barlach</i>	173
WILLIAM C. CALIN. <i>On the Chronology of Gautier d'Arras</i>	181
REVIEWS	197
BOOKS RECEIVED	207

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# **MODERN LANGUAGE QUARTERLY**

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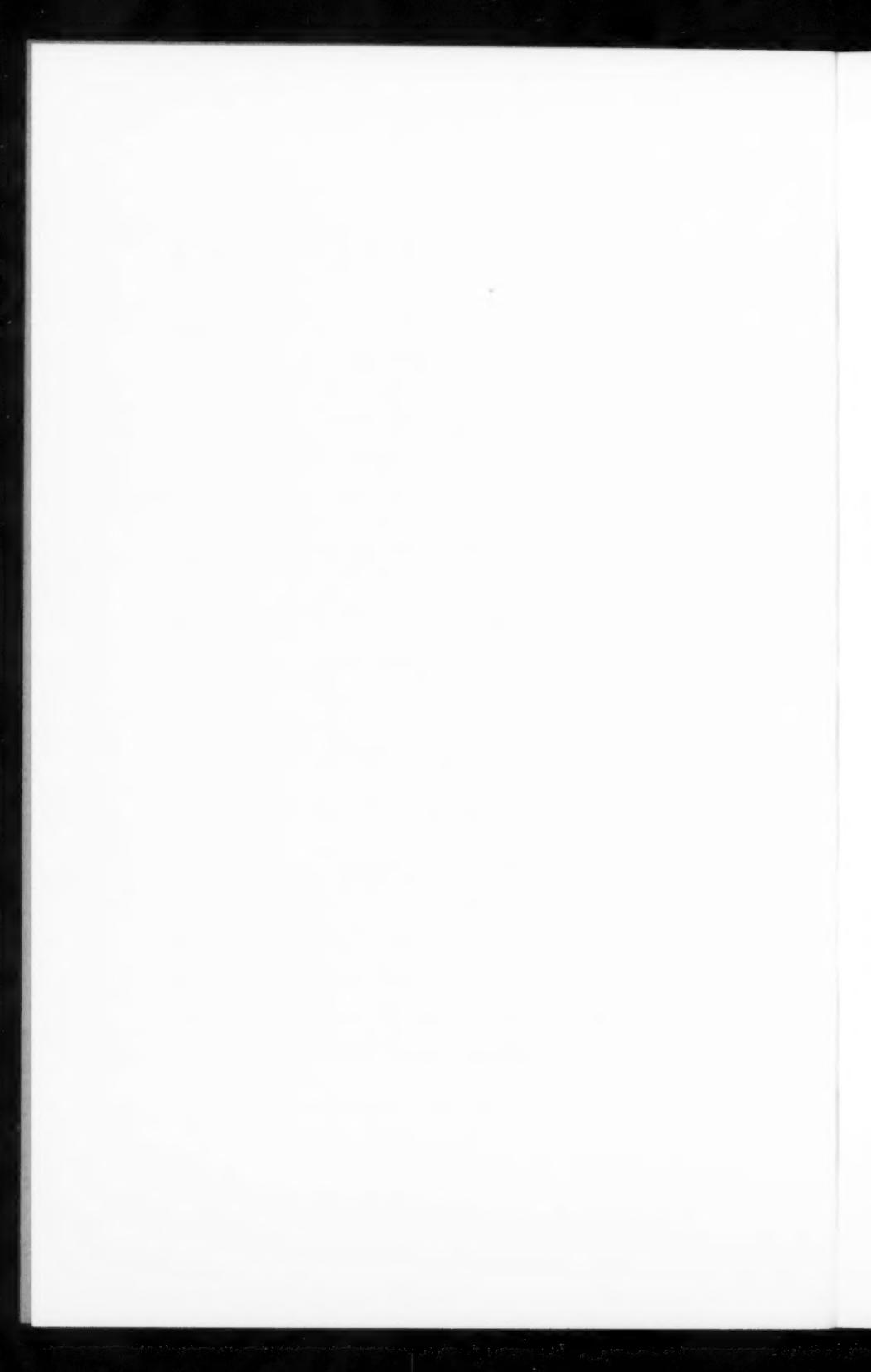
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## ARTICLES

Phil Within, <i>Billy Budd: Testament of Acceptance</i> .....	115
J. Burke Severs. Keats's "Mansion of Many Apartments," <i>Sleep and Poetry</i> , and <i>Tintern Abbey</i> .....	128
Claude E. Jones. Dramatic Criticism in the <i>Critical Review</i> , 1756-1785 (Part II).....	133
Paul A. Brown. A Bibliography of Critical Arthurian Literature for the Year 1958.....	145
William H. Rey. A Tragic View of Thomas Mann.....	167
Edson M. Chick. Comic and Grotesque Elements in Ernst Barlach.....	173
William C. Calin. On the Chronology of Gautier d'Arras.....	181

## REVIEWS

Fredson Bowers. Textual and Literary Criticism [Carl J. Weber].....	197
Jean H. Hagstrum. The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry [Alan D. McKillop].....	198
Ralph M. Wardle. Oliver Goldsmith [George L. Barnett].....	199
Stuart Atkins. Goethe's Faust [Liselotte Dieckmann].....	201
Curt von Faber du Faur. German Baroque Literature [G. Schulz-Behrend].....	202
Dorothy B. Schlegel. Shaftesbury and the French Deists [George R. Havens].....	204
Books Received.....	206



## BILLY BUDD: TESTAMENT OF RESISTANCE

By PHIL WITHIM

When E. L. G. Watson wrote his famous article, "Melville's Testament of Acceptance," he made no attempt to prove his view. All he attempted, all he achieved, was to suggest a way of looking at the story. "Melville," said Watson, "is no longer a rebel."<sup>1</sup> He has come to accept the presence of evil, and he has ceased to blame God for its existence. Other critics began to write on *Billy Budd* in the same vein. Their positions varied somewhat, but the tenor, the direction of the viewpoint was always the same: Melville had mellowed, he was resigned, as Freeman says, to the recognition of necessity.<sup>2</sup> In F. O. Matthiessen's words, "He has come to respect necessity. . . . Melville could now face incongruity; he could accept the existence of both good and evil. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Or as Willard Thorp remarks, "In the end Melville called the truce."<sup>4</sup>

There was, however, some dissent; both Alfred Kazin<sup>5</sup> and Richard Chase<sup>6</sup> indicated dissatisfaction with the "testament of acceptance" theory. In 1950 Joseph Schiffman, in an article which reviewed all these interpretations as well as those of Mumford, Weir, and Sedgwick, put forth a suggestion, which he credited to Gay Wilson Allen, "that *Billy Budd* might best be understood as a work of irony."<sup>7</sup> Since this article appeared, a number of other critics have also objected to the "testament of acceptance" theory or have supported an ironic interpretation; sometimes they have done both.<sup>8</sup>

This paper is another step in this same direction. It accepts the point of view that *Billy Budd* was written in a basically ironic style; it will attempt to establish a thesis in harmony with all of the parts of

<sup>1</sup> E. L. G. Watson, "Melville's Testament of Acceptance," *New England Quarterly*, VI (1933), 322.

<sup>2</sup> F. Barron Freeman, ed., *Melville's Billy Budd* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 115. All page references to *Billy Budd* will be from this edition and will be inserted in parentheses directly following the quotations.

<sup>3</sup> F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (New York, 1941), p. 510.

<sup>4</sup> Willard Thorp, *Herman Melville: Representative Selections* (New York, 1938), p. lxxxiv.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Kazin, "Ishmael in his Academic Heaven," *The New Yorker*, February 19, 1949, pp. 84-89.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Chase, "Dissent on *Billy Budd*," *Partisan Review*, XV (1948), 1212-13. See also his book, *Herman Melville: A Critical Study* (New York, 1949), p. 265.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Schiffman, "Melville's Final Stage, Irony," *American Literature*, XXII (1950), 128-36.

<sup>8</sup> Among them are Tyrus Hillway, "Billy Budd, Melville's Human Sacrifice," *Pacific Spectator*, VI (1952), 342-47; Ray West, "Primitivism in Melville," *Prairie Schooner*, XXX (1956), 369-85; and see below, footnotes 14, 15, 16, and 17.

the story and to demonstrate that the "testament of acceptance" theory is essentially self-contradictory.

The body of the story is concerned with the relationships of three men: Billy Budd, John Claggart, and Captain Vere. Whatever arguments may rage concerning other elements of the story, there is general agreement as to the character and significance of Billy Budd and John Claggart. Billy Budd is the Handsome Sailor uniting "strength and beauty," whose moral nature is not "out of keeping with the physical make" (p. 135). Claggart is Billy's reverse. He is pale and unhealthy looking; his visage seems to hint of something defective or abnormal in the constitution and blood. This contrasts with the conjunction in Billy of beauty and goodness. Claggart had an "evil nature, not engendered by vicious training or corrupting books or licentious living, but born with him and innate, in short 'a depravity according to nature'" (p. 187).

Melville is explicit about his desire to have Billy and Claggart taken as types of good and bad, and this, I think, is the chief argument against those who, like Matthiessen and Freeman, consider homosexuality an aspect of the problem. For if Melville had desired to hint at homosexuality, he would not have denied its possibility; when speaking of Claggart's peculiar nature, he says, "In short the depravity here meant partakes nothing of the sordid or sensual" (p. 186). And speaking of Billy, he says he was "preëminently the Handsome Sailor" (p. 192) who, as Melville has told us in the opening pages of the book, typifies strength united to beauty. In those descriptions of Billy emphasizing his delicate color and the fine detail of his features, the point is to impress us with his purity, his aristocratic heritage, not his femininity. Melville takes care to remind the reader that Billy had thrashed the bully, Red Whiskers (p. 137).

But it is around the third figure, Captain Vere, that the greatest disagreement has arisen. This suggests that a detailed examination of his character and function is essential to any understanding of the novel. He is described as apparently the best type of British naval man:

always acquitting himself as an officer mindful of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline; thoroughly versed in the science of his profession, and intrepid to the verge of temerity, though never injudiciously so. (p. 160)

He loves to read, particularly those books "treating of actual men and events no matter of what era—history, biography and unconventional writers, who, free from cant and convention, like Montaigne, honestly, and in the spirit of common sense philosophize upon realities" (pp. 163-64). In the reading he found

confirmation of his own more reserved thoughts—confirmation which he had vainly sought in social converse, so that as touching most fundamental topics, there had got to be established in him some positive convictions which he forefelt would abide in him essentially unmodified so long as his intelligent part remained unimpaired. (p. 164)

This particular sentence creates a question as to Melville's meaning. Does he suggest here that the only result of Vere's reading is that his mind becomes more and more firmly fixed on his earliest opinions, that no author can ever modify them, either because he will not let their ideas penetrate or because he never reads books that do not agree with him; or does Melville imply that Vere's opinions are instinctively right and that all the books in Vere's library, "compact, but of the best" (p. 163) agree with him unfailingly? But it is as yet too early to decide. Melville continues to describe Vere as one whose "settled convictions were as a dyke against those invading waters of novel opinion social political and otherwise" (p. 164) and as one who opposed these novel opinions because they seemed to him not only "incapable of embodiment in lasting institutions, but at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind" (p. 164). This last phrase sounds suspiciously like cant, like sarcasm. Vere's reasons here are such terribly stock arguments that it is hard to accept them at face value.

The possibility arises that the reader is expected to understand that Vere's reasoning is presented without comment because it is simply and transparently a rationalization of an uninformed and bigoted man who reads only those authors who reinforce his views. But if this possibility is to be accepted as fact, the reader must find other implied criticism of Vere, and, indeed, it does not take much searching. Melville, for example, goes to the trouble of devoting several pages to Nelson, the greatest of English captains,<sup>9</sup> pointing out with approval that Nelson challenged death by his brilliant apparel.

Personal prudence even when dictated by quite other than selfish consideration is surely no special virtue in a military man; while an excessive love of glory, impassioning a less burning impulse the honest sense of duty, is the first. (p. 157)

Nelson, of course, dies a soldier's death, while Vere dies drugged and ashore before ever reaching fame. Nelson is a fighter in direct contact with the enemy; but Vere, in the encounter described in *Billy Budd*, does not have an opportunity to catch the opposing ship. Vere is frequently used for diplomatic missions, the very opposite of a captain's usual job; Vere, says Melville, though a man of "sturdy qualities was without brilliant ones" (p. 162). Nelson is asked to take com-

<sup>9</sup> Wendell Glick, in his article "Expediency and Absolute Morality in *Billy Budd*," *PMLA*, LXVIII (1953), 103-10, devotes much attention to the Nelson episode, equating Nelson not with Vere but with Billy, and discovers both to be heroic. This may be true, although the differences in station, occasion, and motivation seem to be unsurmountable obstacles to such an interpretation. On the other hand, it seems natural to compare Nelson with Vere: both are captains of ships in time of war, both are asked to deal with mutiny. An additional difficulty with Glick's article lies in the fact that his defense is built on the following unsupported statement: "[Melville] agreed with the Captain that justice to the individual is not the ultimate loyalty in a complex culture; the stability of the culture has the higher claim, and when the two conflict, justice to the individual must be abrogated to keep the order of society intact" (p. 104). Since this is exactly the point in question, so far as any interpretation of the meaning of *Billy Budd* is concerned, it seems facile to present it as axiomatic.

mand of a ship recently involved in the Great Mutiny, for "it was thought that an officer like Nelson was the one, *not indeed to terrorize the crew into base subjection*, but to win them, by force of his mere presence back to an allegiance if not as enthusiastic as his own, yet as true" (p. 159; italics mine). Vere, in a similar situation, hangs Billy, "thinking perhaps that under existing circumstances in the navy the consequence of violating discipline should be made to speak for itself" (p. 254).

It is clear that this comparison is not favorable to Captain Vere, and if we look back to earlier descriptions, we find that they apparently contain an implied criticism: "ever mindful of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline"; "intrepid to the verge of temerity, though never injudiciously so." The second half of each statement could merely qualify the virtue mentioned in the first half, or it could cancel the virtue completely.<sup>10</sup>

After Claggart accuses Billy of projected mutiny, Vere decides to confront the two men with each other in his cabin. There Billy, infuriated by the charge, confused and frustrated by his stammer, strikes Claggart dead. Apparently Vere's purpose in bringing them together is to find out the truth.<sup>11</sup> But how does he expect the interview to accomplish this? Claggart would have accused, and Billy would have denied. There seems to be no relevant reason for Vere's decision. Claggart had suggested that there was substantiating evidence not far away, but Vere had not sent for it, since he wished to keep the affair secret because he was afraid of the crew. In short, Vere's decision is based on the single element of prudence, and he ignores all other

<sup>10</sup> Cf. James E. Miller, Jr., "Billy Budd: The Catastrophe of Innocence," *MLN*, LXXIII (1958), 168-76. Miller uses the quotations I have just cited to demonstrate the opposite of my point, namely, that Vere, as opposed to both Billy (all heart) and Claggart (all mind), "is the man of moderation with heart and intellect in ideal balance," who recognizes the "wide and necessary separation of heavenly wisdom and earthly wisdom and the 'impossibility' of the application of the one in the province of the other." In this interpretation Vere becomes a "Hero of Humanity" who shields society from the cataclysmic consequences of Billy's "nakedly spontaneous and raw innocence."

Apparently Miller does not take the quotations in question ironically, whereas I do. But how does one know when to read any line ironically? The answer, I suppose, must be: when such a reading is suggested by and found to be consistent with the total context. In this article, I have tried to submit my own reading to such a test, but I do not find that Miller has. Rather, pretty much abandoning *Billy Budd*, he retreats to *Pierre*, to the Plinlimmon pamphlet, to its famous distinction between heavenly and earthly truth and to its call for a "virtuous expediency." Unfortunately, this pamphlet is not the clearest of Melville's work, and in Willard Thorp's words, "the critics will argue its significance perpetually."

It would seem, therefore, an invalid critical procedure to attempt to explain the uncertain meanings of *Billy Budd* by an appeal to the uncertain meanings of *Pierre*. Even if Melville's intentions, ironic or otherwise, in *Pierre* were crystal clear, which they are not, there is no guarantee that *Billy Budd* embodies them, forty years later.

<sup>11</sup> This point is taken from Lawrence Thompson's *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton, 1952), a book which has been widely and deservedly criticized as totaling somewhat less than the sum of its parts; yet many of those parts are valuable for their detailed analyses and suggestive insights.

elements inherent in the situation. Now Claggart is dead. As Vere looks on, he cries, "Struck dead by an angel of God. Yet the Angel must hang'" (p. 229). Vere must have acute perception, indeed, to see so quickly to the heart of so complex a situation. He realizes instantly that there is no alternative to Billy's death.

Vere calls a court-martial, reserving, however, "to himself as the one on whom the ultimate accountability would rest, the right of maintaining a supervision of it, or formally or informally interposing at need" (p. 236). During the trial the members of the court seem reluctant to hang Billy, and the Captain has to talk them into it. But it is hard to understand why Vere called the court at all. What purpose does it serve? Was it called to guide him to a right decision? But Vere had already made his decision. In any case the court did not guide him; he guided the court. Perhaps he thought the court would overrule him and free the boy. But Vere had reserved for himself the right of supervising and interfering at need. Apparently all Vere wants is to have on record a trial agreeing with his decision.

Vere begins his argument (pp. 244-48) by saying that he would not interfere with their deliberations, but that he sees them at a crisis proceeding "from the clashing of military duty with moral scruple." He advises them to "strive against scruples that may tend to enervate decision." When the men look startled, he explains thus:

"How can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow-creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so?—Does that state it aright? You sign sad assent. Well, I too feel that, the full force of that. It is Nature. But do these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to Nature? No, to the King."

This is the main basis of his argument: we do not serve nature but the king.

"We fight at command. If our judgments approve the war, that is but coincidence. So in other particulars. . . . Would it be so much we ourselves that would condemn as it would be martial law operating through us? For that law and the rigor of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it."

The officer of marines points out that Budd "proposed neither mutiny nor homicide." Vere agrees with him, saying that, after all, "At the Last Assizes it shall acquit," but not now. "War looks but to the frontage, the appearance. And the Mutiny Act, War's child, takes after the father. Budd's intent or non-intent is nothing to the purpose."

No one at any time questions his argument. No one suggests that the king's law should be in harmony with nature's law, or that if there is disagreement between them, the allegiance must be to the higher and the more universal law of nature. No one asks Vere to support his peculiar thesis; it is merely slipped in, so to speak, with the analogy of the buttons: because the men wear the king's buttons, they

are to violate natural laws. Even though Vere has admitted that the Mutiny Act looks only to frontage, to the appearance, no one suggests that the point of justice is to see through appearance to reality. But the reason that no one questions Vere's arguments is that no one understands them. "Loyal lieges, plain and practical . . . they were without the faculty, hardly had the inclination to gainsay one whom they felt to be an earnest man, one too not less their superior in mind than in naval rank" (pp. 248-49).

Vere, however, soon gives them an argument they can understand, for when the junior lieutenant asks why, if they must convict, they cannot mitigate the sentence, Vere replies that they cannot because the crew "will ruminare. You know what sailors are. Will they not revert to the recent outbreak at the Nore. . . . Your clement sentence they would account pusillanimous. They would think that we flinch, that we are afraid of them." And this is the only argument the court really understands, for, as Melville says, "it is not improbable that even such of his words as were not without influence over them, less came home to them than his closing appeal to their instincts as sea-officers. . . ." So for all the finely spun thought, the issue is decided by fear. When subtle arguments fail, Vere calls on, not a rational argument, but an emotional one: an appeal to fear.

Another clue to Vere's thinking comes after Billy has been hanged. The men are put to work at various tasks; they are swept into the routine as fast as possible. Melville writes of this:

"With mankind" he would say "forms, measured forms are everything; and that is the import couched in the story of Orpheus with his lyre spellbinding the wild denizens of the woods." And this [Vere] once applied to the disruption of forms going on across the Channel and the consequences thereof. (p. 272)

Stripped of verbiage, Vere is saying that men cannot think for themselves, that form and habit can control men as if they were no more than beasts. Vere, in an earlier passage, had thought to himself that Billy was a "'King's bargain,' that is to say, for His Britannic Majesty's navy a capital investment at small outlay or none at all" (p. 220). In this light, Vere, far from being a wise man, balanced in his judgments and fair in his attitudes, is discovered to be narrow, literal, prejudiced, completely circumscribed by the needs of the navy, less compassionate than his officers, and lastly, guilty of that worst of naval sins, over-prudence.

The core of Vere's argument is that we must bow to necessity; "For that law and the rigor of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it" (pp. 245-46). A logical extension of this argument is that man should abdicate responsibility for unjust law and enforce it mechanically. Man should not try to change that which is wrong, but merely accept injustice and tyranny and lie supinely beneath them; man is to stand by and watch

the innocent as indiscriminately ground under the heel of unresisted law as are the evil.

Melville makes his opposition to this view clear by dedicating the book to Jack Chase, his companion years before on the frigate *United States*. It was this voyage that became the story of *White-Jacket*, the novel that cried out so eloquently against impressment, flogging, the captain's tyranny. Jack Chase is here mentioned by name and is referred to as "a stickler for the Rights of Man and the liberties of the world."<sup>12</sup> It would be ironic indeed to dedicate *Billy Budd* to such a man if the novel was devoted to submission. However, the preface (pp. 131-32) helps to make clear the direction of the book. In it, Melville speaks of the French Revolution as an expression of "the Spirit of that Age [which] involved the rectification of the Old World's hereditary wrongs." He points out that, although the revolution had in its turn become an oppressor, the outcome was "a political advance along nearly the whole line for Europeans," and he concludes by saying,

in a way analogous to the operation of the Revolution at large the Great Mutiny, though by Englishmen naturally deemed monstrous at the time, doubtless gave the first latent prompting to most important reforms in the British Navy.

In short, tyranny can be successfully resisted.

We can now be sure of the direction of the theme of *Billy Budd*. In local context it suggests that it is wrong to submit to unjust law. Those in power, such as Vere, should do all they can to resist the evil inherent in any institution or government. All men are flawed, but not all men are depraved; and we must not let those institutions designed to control the evil destroy the good. In a larger context, man should not resign himself to the presence of evil but must always strive against it. It is possible to check the validity of this view by making sure that the various incidents, descriptions, and points reinforce it, and that they also contradict the "testament of acceptance" theory.

Observe that Vere dies drugged and on shore before he has "attained to the fullness of fame" (p. 275). In other words, Vere's end is suitable to one who did not deserve such renown as the daring and imprudent Nelson, a man capable, as Vere is not, of inspiring his men to loyalty, of substituting persuasion for coercion.

Observe that Claggart is characterized as civilized and intellectual; the man's even temper and discreet bearing would seem to intimate a mind peculiarly subject to the law of reason, not the less in his heart he would seem to riot in complete exemption from that law having apparently little to do with reason further than to employ it as an ambidexter implement for effecting the irrational. (p. 186)

But such men, continues Melville,

are true madmen, and of the most dangerous sort, for their lunacy is not con-

<sup>12</sup> Herman Melville, *White-Jacket* (London, 1952), p. 29.

tinuous but occasional evoked by some special object; it is probably secretive which is as much to say it is self contained, so that when moreover, most active it is to the average mind not distinguishable from sanity. . . . (p. 187)

This material comes into sharper focus when considered in relationship to Vere. He, like Claggart, is civilized; he, like Claggart, is intellectual; and he, like Claggart, uses reason to a bad end. Melville had suggested that Claggart was mad, and yet in Chapter 21, the surgeon, after seeing Claggart's body and hearing Vere say that the boy must hang, cannot banish this treasonable thought: "Was Captain Vere suddenly affected in his mind . . . ? Was he unhinged?" (p. 231). The surgeon reports, as instructed by Vere, to the lieutenants and the captain of the marines. "They fully stared at him in surprise and concern. Like him they seemed to think that such a matter should be reported to the Admiral" (p. 232). Melville pushes further; in the next chapter he says,

Who in the rainbow can draw the line where the violet tint ends and the orange tint begins? . . . So with sanity and insanity. . . . Whether Captain Vere, as the Surgeon professionally and primarily surmised, was really the sudden victim of any degree of aberration, one must determine for himself by such light as this narrative can afford. (p. 233)

Observe that Billy was removed from a ship called the *Rights of Man* by a lieutenant named Ratcliffe.

Observe that, although Vere was "solicitous of his men's welfare," yet the day after Billy was impressed, the captain flogged "a little fellow, young, a novice an after-guardsman absent from his assigned post when the ship was being put about . . ." (p. 174). It is useful to remember here that, when Melville was a novice, he was almost flogged for the same reason, but was saved by the interference of Jack Chase.<sup>12</sup>

Observe that white is not used to portray innocence, as Matthiessen suggests; on the contrary, it is used as Melville had used it in *Moby-Dick*: to imply terror and possibly evil. For example, Claggart is described as pale in visage; Billy, when accused of treachery, appears "struck as by white leprosy" (p. 225); the young man who tries to persuade Billy to join a mutiny had "glassy eyes of pale blue, veiled with lashes all but white" (p. 202); Claggart's voice is silvery and low; the whistles used to pipe the men to witness the punishment of Billy are silver whistles; the moon that shines at midnight as Vere tells the men about Billy's sentence silvers the white spar-deck (p. 254) as, in the ballad also, it silvers the bay where Billy lies shackled, awaiting death. In this light the whiteness of Billy's clothes may not be a sign of his purity but of the evil which is successfully destroying him; and the "circumambient air in the clearness of its serenity . . . like smooth white marble" (p. 273), which surrounds him as he hangs from the yardarm, may be more concerned with all-conquering evil than with submissive purity.

<sup>12</sup> Melville, *White-Jacket*, p. 269.

Observe that Vere appears at the court-martial as the sole witness, "and as such temporarily sinking his rank, though singularly maintaining it in a matter apparently trivial, namely, that he testified from the ship's weather-side with that object having caused the court to sit on the lee-side" (p. 238). Vere thus chooses the side which puts him literally and metaphorically above the court and gives him, in the slang meaning of the term, the advantage.

Vere, when preparing to address the court, that is, to persuade it to his opinion, paces the cabin,

in the returning ascent to windward, climbing the slant deck in the ship's lee roll; without knowing it symbolizing thus in his action a mind resolute to surmount difficulties even if against primitive instincts strong as the wind and the sea. (p. 243)

But Melville has suggested already that the instincts of the untutored barbarian are sounder than the civilized intellect.

Observe that this is corroborated in the very next paragraph. "When speak he did, something both in the substance of what he said and his manner of saying it, showed the influence of unshared studies modifying and tempering the practical training of an active career" (p. 243). But practicality is exactly what is called for. Vere never refers to these qualities, preferring instead to weave a complex skein of thought which none of his court, though thoroughly competent, can follow.

Even the governing circumstance of the entire story, namely, the recent mutinies and the consequent peril hovering over the fleet, does not go unchallenged by Melville. For at the conclusion of Vere's speech, just after his appeal to the fear of a new revolt, Melville describes the court's frame of mind as akin to that

which in the year 1842 actuated the commander of the U.S. brig-of-war *Somers* to resolve, under the so-called Articles of War, Articles modelled upon the English Mutiny Act, to resolve upon the execution at sea of a midshipman and two petty-officers as mutineers designing the seizure of the brig. Which resolution was carried out though in a time of peace and within not many days sail of home. An act vindicated by a naval court of inquiry subsequently convened ashore. History, and here cited without comment. True, the circumstances on board the *Somers* were different from those on board the *Indomitable*. But the urgency felt, well-warranted or otherwise, was much the same. (p. 249)

Thus, Melville introduces a case whose justice had been considered extremely dubious and which, after forty years, was still being debated in the papers.<sup>14</sup> Melville does not stop here; the last two

<sup>14</sup> For further information relating to the case, see Freeman, pp. 57-65, and Charles R. Anderson, "The Genesis of *Billy Budd*" *American Literature*, XII (1940), 329-46. The latest full-length examination of this incident has been conducted by Richard Thorson Stavey in his 1953 doctoral dissertation at Princeton, "Melville's *Billy Budd*: A New Approach to the Problem of Interpretation." In his abstract (DA, XIV, 822) he says that "because Melville regarded the executions on the *Somers* as 'murder' and because the modifications introduced in *Billy Budd* do not seriously alter the basic situation of the *Somers* incident, it is extremely unlikely that Melville meant *Billy Budd* to be a 'testament of acceptance.' Protest against injustice would seem, under the circumstances, to be much more in order."

sentences state that the circumstances are not the same, and that perhaps the need for swift action on the *Indomitable* is urgent and perhaps it is not. Thus even the circumstance responsible for Vere's basic motive is undermined.

It should be pointed out that the adherents of the "testament of acceptance" theory have to deal not only with the unsuitability of Captain Vere as a spokesman for Melville, but they also have to explain away the presence of a number of contradictions which arise in the story solely as a result of their position. For example, if the story concerns the acceptance of necessary evil, then why does Melville continue beyond the death of Billy, where, and only where, an emotional equilibrium favorable to such an acceptance is attained? Vere's untimely death would be a poor reward for so faithful a servant and in the "acceptance" context would be meaningless, for the point is made and the tale ended with Billy's death. Only an ironical reversing of the point would justify continuation of the story.

It is even possible to bring into question the tone of the hanging scene. Joseph Schiffman, B. R. McElderry, and Harry Campbell have each noted contradictions in this scene that arise only if the story is interpreted as an "acceptance." Schiffman<sup>15</sup> points out that, even though the crew echoes Billy's cry, "God bless Captain Vere," they are not thinking of the captain, for, in Melville's words, "yet at that instant Billy alone must have been in their hearts, even as he was in their eyes" (p. 265).

B. R. McElderry demonstrates that Billy's cry is not unprecedented in the literature of the sea; he cites two plays and a novel by Marryat which have similar scenes. Thus Billy's cry is

what Melville said it was: "a conventional felon's benediction directed aft towards the quarters of honor . . ." (p. 265). It is the traditional ritual of the condemned man forgiving the official who is duty bound to order his death.<sup>16</sup>

If this episode is taken ironically, then it fits the rest of the story as so far interpreted and acquires tremendous power. For Billy is willing to die as Isaac or as Christ was willing; he accepts all the captain's arguments, but it is Billy alone who is noble. The captain suffers and wishes he could avoid this duty, but he has no nobility and above all no trust in man. Yet Billy's very acceptance of his role is the evidence that proves man can be trusted, that man can rise above the need for forms.

Harry Campbell<sup>17</sup> has analyzed the hanging scene and perceives therein an attempt on Melville's part to strike a balance between the sacrificial religious aspect and the aspect of the scene as sheer injustice, as an execution. For example, Melville says that "Billy ascends;

<sup>15</sup> Schiffman, pp. 128-29.

<sup>16</sup> B. R. McElderry, "Three Earlier Treatments of the *Billy Budd* Theme," *American Literature*, XXVII (1955), 251-57.

<sup>17</sup> Harry Campbell, "The Hanging Scene in Melville's *Billy Budd, Foretopman*," *MLN*, LXVI (1951), 378-81.

and ascending, took the full rose of the dawn." But he ascends only to the yardarm, where he remains a pinioned figure. Campbell also notes that the reading of the early *Baby Budd, Sailor* for "rosy dawn" was the powerful religious term "shekinah" (p. 339) and that the "silence accompanying the ascension" (p. 340) later becomes "The silence at the moment of execution" (p. 269). This last change, particularly, suggests that Melville wants us to realize that Billy's death, though noble, is still unjust. If Vere had had such nobility and strength, Billy need not have died. As Kark Zink has said, "The lesson is not that Billy learns to accept the necessary harshness of the forms, but that in their high impersonality there is a dangerous lack of discrimination—dangerous to the individual and to the social structure itself."<sup>18</sup>

Another contradiction inherent in the "acceptance" theory lies in Melville's argument that barbarians with their instincts and warm hearts have sounder values than civilized men with their intricate intellects and their rabid hearts. Would it not be contradictory for Melville to suggest this not once, but twice, and then have Vere, Melville's foremost spokesman, weave a complex intellectual argument? Would it not be contradictory for Melville to have Billy die bravely, crying "God bless Captain Vere," and then have Vere say directly that mankind is a denizen of the forest and must be controlled by form and routine?

Would it not be contradictory, in the "testament of acceptance" framework, for Melville to use for the captain's name a word which at first glance suggests *veritas* "truth," but on second glance can as easily suggest *veritus* "fear," or on third glance, *vir* "man"?

Would it not be contradictory for him to use as symbols of evil flogging, impressment, arbitrary hanging, when these evils had been corrected by the time that he wrote this story, partly through his own writing?

Would it not be contradictory for Melville to use Vere as a symbol of the proper recognition of necessary evil: a man who had opposed the French Revolution and all its new social and political doctrines which since have changed the globe and reduced tyranny, injustice, poverty, and disease? Might it not be argued that, since Vere was wrong in his judgment of these attempts to change existing evils, he might also be wrong about the case in hand?

Would it not be contradictory for Melville to have a captain who is intelligent and widely read in both the ancients and the moderns, who does not apply this breadth of experience, who sees no larger context than the immediate needs of the navy?

Again, would it not be contradictory for Melville to represent Billy as inarticulate, nonthinking, naïve, emotionally adolescent, and morally undeveloped, and then expect the reader to accept his cry, "God

<sup>18</sup> Karl E. Zink, "Herman Melville and the Forms—Irony and Social Criticism in *Billy Budd*," *Accent*, XII (1952), 139.

bless Captain Vere," as indicative of full understanding, instinctive or otherwise?

And finally, is not the "acceptance" theory contradictory to all that Melville stood for and fought for throughout his entire life? He had been a seaman and had witnessed at first hand the floggings and the tyrannies of the captains. He had never approved of such practices, and in *White-Jacket* he thundered against them from every angle.

No matter, then, what may be the consequences of its abolition; no matter if we have to dismantle our fleets, and our unprotected commerce should fall a prey to the spoiler, the awful admonitions of justice and humanity demand that abolition without procrastination; in a voice that is not to be mistaken, demand that abolition to-day. It is not a dollar-and-cent question of expediency; it is a matter of *right and wrong*. And if any man can lay his hand on his heart, and solemnly say that this scourging is right, let that man but once feel the lash on his own back, and in his agony you will hear the apostate call the seventh heavens to witness that it is *wrong*. And, in the name of immortal manhood, would to God that every man who upholds this thing were scourged at the gangway till he recanted. (p. 147)

Melville was a fighter, he was stubborn, he never accepted the easy way out. Would it not then be contradictory for him, after a lifetime of resisting practical evil in the world at large and metaphysical evil in his novels, at the very end to discover that he had been wrong all along and that his duty had always been to lie down and accept evil as unavoidable?

It is now possible to review the story swiftly. It begins with a cue from a narrator; a rebellion, like the French Revolution or the Spit-head Mutiny, may result in good, although in the beginning it may not seem so. Thus, rebellion is justified in the first pages, the implication being that evil can and perhaps should be resisted. We have seen how the various characteristics of the three main actors are clues to the working out of this theme. Claggart is evil through and through; he possesses the perverted intelligence of a serpent, an intelligence used for irrational purposes. Billy Budd, on the contrary, is pure innocence, acting and judging on instinct alone. When Vere is introduced, his central characteristic is his intellect, by means of which he can justify or rationalize an over-prudence that leads to injustice. The chapter on Nelson reminds us that Vere's kind of caution and Vere's way of preventing possible mutiny are not admirable.

It may be argued that, while both Vere and Claggart possess intelligence, Vere uses his wisely and justly. But this argument collapses when it is perceived that Vere does not do what reason would suggest in so dubious a case, i.e., jail Billy until they reach land. The real point is, of course, that Vere does not act on reason and intelligence at all, but on fear; his intelligence, instead of being a guide, is a perverted instrument. Such scenes as the confusion of the officers and the doubt of the surgeon concerning Vere's sanity make sense only when regarded as putting into issue Vere's stature and ability.

It may also be argued that such episodes are intended to demon-

strate that Vere and only Vere has the intelligence and insight to perceive the deeper issues. But this explanation falls to the ground when it is realized that Vere's whole argument is irrational and that his final appeal is to brute force. The ballad at the end becomes particularly rich in this context. Billy is to be sacrificed, but unjustly and unnecessarily so. The ballad, written by one of his comrades who does not understand the issues but who feels obscurely the truth of the matter in spite of a calumnious official report, speaks of Billy as unafraid but sad. Billy, being innocence personified, does not fear death; but as an unjust sacrifice, he is pictured as alone and unhappy. He longs for companionship and affection and thinks wistfully of his friends; in the end he contemplates with a melancholy resignation his death:

Fathoms down, fathoms down, how I'll dream fast asleep.  
I feel it stealing now. Sentry, are you there?  
Just ease these darbies at the wrist,  
And roll me over fair.  
I am asleep, and the oozy weeds about me twist.

(p. 281)

Thus, Billy's cry, "God Bless Captain Vere," is the crowning irony and really the climax of the story, for he was hanged unjustly. Melville says here that a harsh truth of this harsh world is that good folk can be misled, that they can be abused by the evil simply because they are trusting. Thus Melville reminds us that we must keep up the good fight: evil must not remain uncontested. And he does so not by a call to arms but by demonstrating the consequences of unresisting acquiescence.

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## KEATS'S "MANSION OF MANY APARTMENTS," SLEEP AND POETRY, AND TINTERN ABBEY

By J. BURKE SEVERS

In a rambling letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, written May 3, 1818, dealing in part with Milton and Wordsworth, Keats develops an often-quoted simile of human life:

With your patience, I will return to Wordsworth—whether or no he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur—whether he is an eagle in his nest, or on the wing— And to be more explicit and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it; that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at— Well—I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think— We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression—whereby this Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages— We see not the ballance of good and evil. We are in a Mist. We are now in that state— We feel the "burden of the Mystery", To this Point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote "Tintern Abbey" and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them—he is a Genius and superior [to] us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them.<sup>1</sup>

A great deal of harm has been done in Keats criticism by a careless application of this letter to Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and to Keats's own *Sleep and Poetry*.<sup>2</sup> Fuzzy and superficial resemblances

<sup>1</sup> M. B. Forman, ed., *Letters of John Keats* (Oxford, 1952), Letter 64, pp. 142-43.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Bridges, "Critical Introduction" to *Poems of John Keats*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London [1894]), pp. xxxiii-xxxix; E. de Sélincourt, ed., *Poems of John Keats*, 7th ed. (London, 1951), pp. 406-408 [1st ed., 1905]; Sidney Colvin, *John Keats* (London, 1918), pp. 126-29; Amy Lowell, *John Keats* (Boston, 1925), I, 219-23; Clarence D. Thorpe, *The Mind of John Keats* (New York, 1926), pp. 49-51. All these writers, though in varying degrees developing differences between Keats and Wordsworth, build upon the basic triple equivalence of the Mansion letter and two poems as promulgated by Bridges. Newell F. Ford's partial comment (*The Prefigurative Imagination of John Keats* [Stanford, 1951], pp. 25-26) is somewhat more accurate; only J. Middleton Murry (*Keats and Shakespeare* [London, 1926], p. 25) states flatly and plainly, but

have been suggested, with little or no perception of their inaccuracies. The comparisons have passed from critic to critic, with varying degrees of resulting confusion, until now it would seem time to re-examine the comparisons to ascertain how much validity they possess for our understanding of the poems involved.

Robert Bridges initiated the confusion in an otherwise admirable critical introduction to the Muses Library edition of Keats's *Poems*, in which he developed detailed similarities between Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* on the one hand and Keats's letter and *Sleep and Poetry* on the other. Keats himself, of course, suggests the relevance of *Tintern Abbey* to his "simile of human life"; but it is important to perceive precisely what that relevance is. In applying his simile of human life to his own development, Keats pictures himself at the time he is writing the letter as occupying the second chamber—the Chamber of Maiden-Thought—at the moment when his maiden thinking has darkened the chamber and set open the doors leading to the dark passages. At this moment he finds a comparison and a contrast between himself and Wordsworth: the two poets are alike in that "To this Point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote 'Tintern Abbey' . . . ."

When Wordsworth wrote *Tintern Abbey*, he was, as he tells us in that poem, entered into the third stage of his development—that stage in which he hears "the still, sad music of humanity" (91). The contrast which Keats perceives between himself and Wordsworth is that the latter is a genius who can shed a light in the dark passages, more than Keats himself can. This comparison and contrast between Keats in his second Chamber and Wordsworth in his third stage constitutes the relevance, the total relevance, of *Tintern Abbey* to the Mansion of Many Apartments.

Bridges, however, is not satisfied until he has extended the relevance to a complete parallelism of Keats's three chambers with Wordsworth's three stages: Keats's "infant or thoughtless Chamber" with Wordsworth's stage of "glad animal movements" (74), Keats's "Chamber of Maiden-Thought" with Wordsworth's stage "of thoughtless youth" (90), and Keats's "dark Passages" with Wordsworth's stage in which he hears "the still, sad music of humanity" (91). Nowhere, of course, does Keats suggest such an extension: indeed, a detailed comparison of chambers and stages will reveal differences which render the parallelism untenable.

I have already shown in the preceding paragraphs that at the one point where Keats permits his chambers to cross, or coincide with,

without sufficient supporting discussion, that "it is a mistake to assimilate *Sleep and Poetry* too closely to *Tintern Abbey*." A recent critic (Earl R. Wasserman, *The Finer Tone* [Baltimore, 1953], pp. 116-37) not only seems to accept the triple equivalence with all its fuzziness but proceeds to use the Mansion letter as "an elucidation of Porphyro's progress [in *The Eve of St. Agnes*] almost detail by detail." This fantastic notion, involving as it does an additional poem, is outside the bounds of my present limited study.

Wordsworth's stages, Keats is in his *second* chamber and Wordsworth in his *third* stage (cf. Keats's "Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me"). Another difference is that Wordsworth's second stage is "thoughtless" (90), a time when there is "no need of a remoter charm / By thought supplied" (81-82), whereas Keats's second chamber is one of "Maiden-Thought"—thought which leads progressively to a perception of the misery and heartbreak in the world.

It is, of course, erroneous to interpret the intoxication with light and atmosphere and pleasant wonders in the Chamber of Maiden-Thought as a luxuriating in the delights of the senses: Keats here is speaking in images, as a poet, and is depicting the delights which human beings experience in thinking their maiden thoughts. The climax of Wordsworth's insight in his third stage is his semi-mystic perception of the one spirit that "rolls through all things" (102), whereas, of course, there is nothing of this in Keats's letter. Finally, it is worth pointing out that Keats's simile is broader than the development portrayed in *Tintern Abbey*: it is "a simile of human life" ("I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments . . ."), with emphasis upon the growth of thought in its application to human problems, whereas Wordsworth's poem traces the three stages in the development of his attitude toward Nature, which is only one aspect of human life (though, of course, the major one to Wordsworth).

Keats himself suggested the relevance of *Tintern Abbey* to the Mansion of Many Apartments, but Bridges has only his own warrant for extending the relevance to *Sleep and Poetry*. He finds Wordsworth's three stages reflected also in the poem: Keats's images of the tumbling pigeon and laughing schoolboy (93-95) he equates with Wordsworth's first stage; Keats's realm of sensuous pleasures (101-21) with Wordsworth's second stage; Keats's realm of the "nobler life / Where [he] may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (122-54, especially 123-25) with Wordsworth's third stage. "The meaning of it [the cited passage in *Sleep and Poetry*] is exactly the same with that of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*," Bridges maintains; ". . . the sense in the two poems . . . is identical" (pp. xxxiii, xxxv).

The first thing to observe is that Keats's images of the pigeon and schoolboy do not constitute a stage in his development at all, and it is a misreading of the poem to consider them as an element in its structure parallel with the two realms of poesy. A brief analysis of this part of the poem will reveal the true reading. In *Sleep and Poetry* Keats is concerned with his own development as a poet: he realizes that his achievement has not been great enough to merit that high title, but he dedicates himself to the task and envisages a future in which he will write verse worthy of immortality (47-84). Then follow the lines containing the pictures of the pigeon and the schoolboy:

Stop and consider! life is but a day;  
 A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way  
 From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep  
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?  
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;  
 The reading of an ever-changing tale;  
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;  
 A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;  
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or care,  
 Riding the springy branches of an elm.

(85-95)

These lines, set off in the poem as a verse paragraph, constitute a unit stressing the brevity of life and suggesting, first, the poet's fears that he may not have time enough to reach the high goal as poet which he has just envisaged, and then his reassurances to himself that, after all, he may. Though they are a unit, the lines divide into two parts, separated by the self-directed question, "Why so sad a moan?" In the lines preceding the question the images suggesting life's brevity have been pessimistic and sad; in the lines following the question they are hopeful and happy. Hopefully and happily life is represented as an unblown rose (90), the reading of a varied tale (91), the glimpsing of a maiden's beauty (92), a tumbling pigeon (93), and a laughing, elm-riding schoolboy (94-95).

All five images are one in mood and function. Though the last two certainly deal with "glad animal movements," the other three do not; and it is not justifiable to isolate the two and interpret them, out of context, as a stage in the poet's development. They do not depict a stage, but (with the other three) a mood, an attitude toward life. That this interpretation, with its emphasis on the transitoriness of life, is the right one is manifest from the immediately following lines, with their outcry, "O for ten years!" (96).

It is true that there is a superficial resemblance between Keats's realm "of Flora and old Pan," with the young poet's sensuous delight in nature, and Wordsworth's second stage in which the colors and the forms of nature impart "dizzy raptures" to him. But in Keats's first realm, it is chiefly taste, touch, and smell which delight him, and the chief objects are grass, apples, strawberries, almond blossoms, and cinnamon (102-103, 118), whereas in Wordsworth's second stage, it is hearing and sight which lead to the aching joys, and the objects are rocks, cataracts, and gloomy woods. Even more characteristically, of the twenty-one lines in which Keats describes the first realm (101-21), only a few are given to nature: all the rest have to do with "white-handed nymphs" and the poet's very un-Wordsworthian dealings with them (to be sure, in a natural setting, but the emphasis is not on the pleasures of nature!). Surely the contrasts here between the two poets are more instructive than the similarities.

In his second realm Keats passes from these sensuous joys to deal with suffering, struggling humanity (122-54); Wordsworth in his

third stage is chastened and subdued by his thoughts of the sadness of humanity. Here, again, there is a general similarity; but in Keats's *Sleep and Poetry*, as in his Mansion letter, there is nothing comparable to the central, climactic, unifying insight which the older poet achieves, of

A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things. (100-102)

Instead, Keats gives us a vision of the poet imaginatively evoking images of all sorts and conditions of men, empathically entering into their various emotions, and setting down in verse all that his imagination has evoked. Far from achieving any mystic union with the one spirit permeating the universe, Keats's poet identifies himself with various emotions of various men. For Wordsworth, the One remains; for Keats, the Many change and pass.

The suggested parallelism between *Sleep and Poetry* and *Tintern Abbey*, then, seems to reduce itself to two fairly general and not very significant similarities: each poet is speaking of a development through stages (two stages in Keats, three in Wordsworth), and the development, generally speaking, is from the sensuous to the humanitarian. The differences between the two poems, however, are more numerous and more significant than the similarities, and more richly repay study.

It should by now be clear that much unnecessary confusion results from the misguided attempt to force the Mansion letter, *Sleep and Poetry*, and *Tintern Abbey* into coincidence. Fundamentally, the confusion arises because each of the three writings deals with a quite different sort of development. The Mansion letter traces the growth of "the thinking principle" in human beings, with special reference to the writer and Wordsworth; *Sleep and Poetry* forecasts the writer's progress as a poet; and *Tintern Abbey* explains the writer's successive attitudes toward nature. All three developments are divided into stages; but since the developments are of three different things (the thinking principle, poetic progress, attitude toward nature), the stages in one development can have only partial and qualified relevance to the stages in the other developments. If the reader will hold the basically different subjects of the three writings firmly in mind, he will be less likely to be confused by any suggested similarities which are at best approximate and in most respects obfuscating.

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DRAMATIC CRITICISM IN THE *Critical Review*,

1756-1785

PART II \*

By CLAUDE E. JONES

As is usual in the history of any art, the critics of the third quarter of the eighteenth century looked down on the drama of the immediate past (1750-1775). This is particularly evident in their treatment of the Restoration writers of comedy, although the principal objection urged against the school of Wycherley, Congreve, and Farquhar is that of immorality, a stigma which has clung to the period in the minds of most critics<sup>91</sup> until today. In 1757 mention is made of the licentiousness of the Restoration stage,<sup>92</sup> while nine years later a critic recommends that Wycherley's plays be altered because none "are fit for representation."<sup>93</sup> In 1765 a writer for the *Review* speaks with conscious superiority of "the depraved theatrical vernacularity after 1665, which is now discouraged by the improving taste and morals of the public."<sup>94</sup> The *Critical* was not alone in this attitude,<sup>95</sup> but many heretics felt that, for comedy, Congreve was still the outstanding figure in English drama. Such was the attitude of John Pinkerton<sup>96</sup> and of the French critic Formey.<sup>97</sup>

The only two early English plays on which the *Critical* reviewers passed judgment were Peele's *David and Bethsaba*, which received favorable mention,<sup>98</sup> and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which was used to epitomize all that was crude and low in the early English drama,<sup>99</sup> an opinion which had already found expression in Chetwood's *General History of the Stage*.<sup>100</sup> Of the Elizabethan comic writers, only five were considered worth mention: Shakespeare (whom we shall treat later), Massinger, Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher. R. G. Noyes has shown<sup>101</sup> that Jonson was popular from 1756-1776, and this continued to be true until long after 1785. There were more than two hundred

<sup>91</sup> Part I appeared in the March, 1959, issue of *MLQ*.

<sup>92</sup> But see William P. Kerr's introduction to *Restoration Verse* (London, 1930).

<sup>93</sup> III (March, 1757), 277.

<sup>94</sup> XXI (Jan., 1766), 61-62.

<sup>95</sup> XIX (April, 1765), 251.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *The Lounger*, No. 50 (Sat., Jan. 4, 1786).

<sup>97</sup> *Letters of Literature*, by Robert Heron [pseud.] (London, 1785), pp. 43-48.

<sup>98</sup> *Elementary Principles of the Belles Lettres*, trans. Sloper Foreman (London, 1766), p. 77.

<sup>99</sup> XXXV (May, 1773), 353: "many passages of which Milton would not have been ashamed."

<sup>100</sup> IV (Nov., 1757), 470; and see XII (Sept., 1761), 226.

<sup>101</sup> (Dublin, 1749), pp. 12-13.

stage presentations of Jonson's plays during the first twenty-one years of the *Critical*'s existence; furthermore, one full edition of his works and eighteen editions of individual plays appeared. In the *Review*, however, Jonson is not highly thought of, although he is called by one reviewer the best seventeenth-century dramatic poet after Shakespeare and is referred to as superior to such writers as Lee and Otway. In 1756, in the article on Whalley's edition of Jonson's complete works, the reviewer says that Jonson's cant phrases render him unintelligible.<sup>101</sup> In 1760 Jonson, with Beaumont and Fletcher, is cited<sup>102a</sup> as justifying plagiarism by his example. Eleven years later, we learn that *The Alchemist* was considered insipid until rendered popular by Garrick.

In 1759 Massinger's *Works*<sup>103</sup> caused more unfavorable comment than had been excited by Jonson. Although the reviewers were ready to grant that Beaumont and Fletcher were "perhaps the best masters of *bardinage* that ever wrote,"<sup>104</sup> they seem as little stirred by these two authors as by Jonson. Except in the case of Shakespeare, to whom no rules apply, the *Critical* thinks little of Elizabethan and Jacobean comedy.

The conception of comedy which was characteristic of the third quarter of the eighteenth century included not only the older type, defined by Farquhar as "a well fram'd Tale handsomely told, as an agreeable Vehicle for Counsel or Reproof,"<sup>105</sup> but also that sentimental comedy referred to by Goldsmith as "bastard Tragedy."<sup>106</sup> Perhaps the critics' attitude is best expressed in the following statement: "Ridicule, as Aristotle teaches us, is the proper business of comedy, and we cannot avoid looking on the *very* sentimental parts of many of our modern comedies as heterogeneous."<sup>107</sup> Possibly the fact that they were willing to tolerate the sentimental kind at all was due to their conviction that, for the most part, wit and humor were exiled from the stage, "and their places supplied by intrigue, ribaldry, and impertinence."<sup>108</sup> Another feature of the modern development of comedy to which the reviewers objected was the extensive use of tricks and intrigue.<sup>109</sup>

This does not mean, however, that the critics wanted character

<sup>101</sup> *Ben Jonson on the English Stage, 1660-1776* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935). The following statistics are taken from Noyes.

<sup>102</sup> I (Jan.-Feb., 1756), 465. See LVII (Jan., 1784), 26; LVII (May, 1784), 336.

<sup>102a</sup> X (July, 1760), 69-70. The following comment on *The Alchemist* appears in XXXII (Sept., 1771), 229.

<sup>103</sup> Ed. Coxeter; reviewed in the *Critical*, VIII (July, 1759), 86-87.

<sup>104</sup> XVI (Oct., 1763), 303.

<sup>105</sup> *Discourse upon Comedy* (1702), quoted by W. E. Durham, *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1915), p. 273.

<sup>106</sup> *Essay* No. 22.

<sup>107</sup> XXXVIII (Sept., 1774), 238.

<sup>108</sup> XV (Feb., 1763), 97. See XII (Dec., 1761), 437; XXXVII (Feb., 1774), 135; XLI (March, 1776), 239; IV (Nov., 1757), 439; VII (April, 1759), 378.

<sup>109</sup> XIII (Feb., 1762), 137; XV (Feb., 1763), 96.

at the expense of plot, for they were unfavorable to Goldsmith's theory that character development is the only important feature in comedy.<sup>110</sup> The *Critical* laid even less stress on observance of classical rules in comedy than it did in tragedy. The reviewers mention that it is the custom for comedy to be written in prose in England,<sup>111</sup> and one author is reprimanded for an "unnecessary transgression against the unity of time."<sup>112</sup> The critics never went so far as Farquhar's "The Rules of English Comedy don't lie in the compass of *Aristotle*, or his followers, but in the Pitt, Box, and Galleries."<sup>113</sup> Nor did they agree with Lope de Vega: "Since the crowd pays for the comedies, it is fitting to talk foolishly to it to satisfy its taste."<sup>114</sup> The *Review* goes so far, however, as to recommend Mrs. Cowley's *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* because it is "tremblingly alive in the theatre. This magic is worth a host of criticisms."<sup>115</sup>

Gradually the journal became more and more favorably disposed toward sentimental comedy,<sup>116</sup> until finally we find a work censured because, although it has good intrigue, it is without "a sentimental stroke."<sup>117</sup> After the appearance of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, however, the *Review* swings back to the older type of comedy as criterion:

The variety of pleasing and well-imagined incidents with which Mr. Sheridan has enriched his dramatic performances, together with the high-seasoned wit and humour so liberally disposed through them, has so tickled the palates of our modern audiences, that a plain, simple fable, however moral, and however interesting, if not enlivened by strong character and sprightly converse, will not now go down.<sup>118</sup>

Its veneration for the manager of Covent Garden<sup>119</sup> did not, however, keep the *Critical* from being displeased with the strictures on modern tragedy in his *The Critic*:

Ridicule is a dangerous and destructive weapon, which Drawncansir like, destroys everything before it, without mercy and without discretion. Wantonness of wit, and exuberance of fancy have carried the ingenious author of *The Critic* beyond the limits of reason, justice, and impartiality . . . [he] has attacked tragedy itself. Since the exhibition of *The Critic*, tragedy . . . is fallen with contempt, it will be some time at least before she can recover the blow.<sup>120</sup>

Another dramatist-manager to whom the *Critical* paid considerable

<sup>110</sup> XXV (Feb., 1768), 147-48.

<sup>111</sup> VIII (Aug., 1759), 157.

<sup>112</sup> XXXV (March, 1773), 231.

<sup>113</sup> *Discourse, loc. cit.*

<sup>114</sup> Lope de Vega, *Art of Writing Plays* (1609).

<sup>115</sup> LVII (March, 1784), 201.

<sup>116</sup> XI (Jan., 1761), 30; XXXI (Jan., 1771), 71.

<sup>117</sup> XXX (Dec., 1770), 445.

<sup>118</sup> L (Dec., 1780), 474. And also XLIX (Jan., 1780), 62, where the critic claims that "The School for Scandal puts us out of conceit with almost every other modern comedy."

<sup>119</sup> I.e., Sheridan.

<sup>120</sup> LII (Nov., 1781), 393.

deference was David Garrick of Drury Lane. Of him, the anonymous author of *A Dissertation on Comedy* says:

Since Mr. Garrick's management, the Stage is become the School of Manners and Morality. Ribaldry and Prophaneness are no longer tolerated. Sense and Nature Exert their Influence . . . the British can now vie with the Athenian Drama, when in its severest State of Purity.<sup>121</sup>

While the *Critical* would hardly have carried encomium so far, its attitude toward Garrick was consistently friendly.<sup>122</sup> Other authors of comedy who met with almost entire approval are Arthur Murphy,<sup>123</sup> Richard Cumberland,<sup>124</sup> and, of course, Oliver Goldsmith, who was for a time a reviewer.

For the Italian and French dramatists, the *Critical* had scant praise. Of Italian comedy little is said during the first thirty years, except for Metastasio, who "though far inferior to Shakespeare in the drama, undoubtedly possesses some qualities common to both."<sup>125</sup> The reviewer adds, "we have paid him [Metastasio] a sublime compliment, in admitting a resemblance between him and Shakespeare; an honour, we think, scarcely due to any English poet except Milton, Otway, and Spencer." The other Italian authors are censured for their dull plots, insipid dialogue, low characters, and improbable incidents.<sup>126</sup>

Among the French authors, Voltaire, as dramatist and dramatic critic, fared poorly at the hands of the *Critical* writers. Although he received praise as a dramatic critic in 1760,<sup>127</sup> five years later he was included among "minor critics, a Dennis, a Rymer, or one who, in that capacity, is more contemptible than both, a Voltaire."<sup>128</sup> In 1766 he is mentioned because of his attack on Shakespeare: "Voltaire is a poet [i.e., versifier], how can he feel the force of Shakespeare's genius?"<sup>129</sup> He might attack established government, religion, or commonly accepted standards of morality, and be pardoned because of his wit; but his heresy in regard to Shakespeare<sup>130</sup> touched the re-

<sup>121</sup> *Dissertation on Comedy* (London, 1750), p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> See XI (June, 1761), 494; XIII (Feb., 1762), 157-58.

<sup>123</sup> Murphy was accused by Charles Churchill (*Apology*) of being an author for the *Review*. This was denied and seems improbable because Murphy was reprimanded during the first year or two of the *Critical*.

<sup>124</sup> XXXI (Feb., 1771), 112-16.

<sup>125</sup> XXIV (July, 1767), 51, where the following quotation also appears; see also III (April, 1757), 375.

<sup>126</sup> Such as Goldoni in IV (Nov., 1757), 439; Guarini in LIV (July, 1782), 50; and Niccolò Machiavelli in XVI (July, 1763), 39.

<sup>127</sup> X (Dec., 1760), 430-31: "No writer ever thought with more freedom than M. Voltaire; his criticisms are bold, they are generally just, always ingenious and genteel; he never disputes but with the decency of a gentleman. No man ever studied the French stage with more accuracy than M. Voltaire. He was the first who ventured to trespass on the cold correctness deemed essential to French tragedy, contributing equally to move the passions by terror and surprise, and keeping the harmony of numbers. . . . [He] received great benefit from studying our Shakespeare."

<sup>128</sup> XX (Oct., 1765), 326.

<sup>129</sup> XXII (Oct., 1766), 285.

<sup>130</sup> *Appel à Toutes les Nations de l'Europe des Jugemens d'un Ecrivain Anglais* (1761). See *Lettre à l'Académie Française* (Aug. 25, 1776). For a complete

viewers in a vulnerable place, their organ of veneration. This was true of almost all Englishmen familiar with the works of the Sage of Ferney.

Other French dramatists also met with little favor, and in 1765 a reviewer goes so far as to say, "Molière excepted, no genius ever wrote for the French stage: Corneille and Racine are mere poets, scarce upon a level with our Addison and Rowe."<sup>181</sup> This feeling is echoed by Pinkerton, "Our stage, thank heaven, refuses the insipidity of the French drama."<sup>182</sup> Part of this attitude was due, no doubt, to the national antagonism which existed at the time and was to continue at least until well into the nineteenth century. But the primary cause seems to have been the incompatibility between the attitude of the *Critical* and the fidelity to the rules which characterized writers across the Channel.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the old forms of the drama, comedy and tragedy, were supplemented by several new types, including farce, opera, operetta, and *burletta*. The most important of these is the farce, which may have been descended from the Elizabethan Jig. Thomas Brown writes of the drama in 1701: "What are all their new Plays but Damn'd Insipid Dull *Farces*, confounded Toothless *Satyr*, or Plaguy *Rhyming Plays*, with Scurvy Heroes, worse than the Knight of the Sun, or *Armadis de Gaul*."<sup>183</sup> Sixty years later, farces were neither damned nor dull. The possibilities of the genre had been seen by John Rich before the middle of the century, and it was to reach perfection at the hands of Samuel Foote, who received a patent for summer presentation at the Haymarket Theatre in 1782, although he had already been acting there for fifteen years without such permission.

The difference between comedy and farce is explained by one reviewer:

Though farce and comedy be equally compositions intended to excite the laughter of the audience, they are widely different in respect of the means by which they endeavour to produce that effect. In legitimate comedy there are certain laws of decorum, which even the greatest eccentricity of character ought never to violate; but in farcical productions, a more extensive latitude may be allowed; always excluding, however, what is obviously immoral or profane.<sup>184</sup>

This would seem to indicate that, on the whole, farces should not be subjected to close criticism; yet we find reviewers taking writers in this genre to task for violating the principle of probability,<sup>185</sup> for not

study of this aspect of Voltaire's reputation in England see T. R. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare and Voltaire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1902). An excellent summary, with additional material, is in Robert Witbeck Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry, 1776-1779* (Chapel Hill, 1931), pp. 90-110.

<sup>181</sup> XIX (Feb., 1765), 154. See also XXII (July, 1766), 50, 51, 54; L (Dec., 1780), 474; LIX (June, 1785), 458.

<sup>182</sup> *Letters*, p. 42.

<sup>183</sup> *Amusements, Serious and Comical* (London, 1703), p. 57.

<sup>184</sup> LVI (Oct., 1783), 319.

<sup>185</sup> I (Jan.-Feb., 1756), 80.

observing decorum,<sup>136</sup> and for failure to maintain suspense. One critic insists on the necessity of strongly marked and differentiated characters in a farce.<sup>137</sup>

Samuel Foote, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, was the author of many successful farces. On the whole, his work met with few strictures from the *Critical*, which praises him for his ability at "taking off living manners"<sup>138</sup> and states that he "has caught from the Shakespeare of Spain, Lope de Vega, that *vis comica* that both Corneille and Steele missed."<sup>139</sup> In other words, in the hands of Foote, this genre became more important than one would expect of an "appendix to a regular drama."<sup>140</sup> Yet it was used to relieve the mind fatigued by the strong passions aroused by tragedy,<sup>141</sup> rather than to furnish "broad or low comedy," which was its principal function by 1820.<sup>142</sup>

Another new form, the opera, which had originated in Italy, had become by the middle of the eighteenth century a popular and lucrative division of the English drama. Of course, some rules were drawn up by the critics, although they frankly admitted that "in the composition of operas, custom has sanctioned liberties that would not be allowed in the construction of a regular drama."<sup>143</sup> They also realized that the critic had to see these pieces performed in order to judge their merit: "We are deficient in two-thirds of the requisites for reviewing it [a comic opera], we mean hearing and seeing."<sup>144</sup>

The toleration of the critics for this form was, however, limited almost entirely to English operas, which were usually comic. Italian and Italianate serious opera does not meet with favor during this period.<sup>145</sup> Of Hoole's *Cyrus*, for instance, a reviewer says that the plot contains the "perplexed involutions of distress by which operatical drama" is distinguished from tragedy.<sup>146</sup> Isaac Bickerstaff, the author of *Love in a Village*, is praised for having "revived the comic opera among us"<sup>147</sup> and as the best writer in the form. We find mention of the increasing importance of dialogue in the English examples of the genre. This comment appears in a review of 1782:

<sup>136</sup> XII (Dec., 1761), 481.

<sup>137</sup> XLVII (May, 1779), 395.

<sup>138</sup> XXVIII (July, 1769), 53.

<sup>139</sup> XXVIII (Aug., 1769), 120; but see XLV (Feb., 1778), 155-56, where Foote is censured for his reflections on the French in his *Englishman Returned from Paris*. See also I (Jan.-Feb., 1756), 83.

<sup>140</sup> *CHEL*, X, 83.

<sup>141</sup> Pinkerton, p. 199, says, "The modern farces are with more propriety brought forward at the close of more important dramas; and are particularly necessary after tragedy, to relieve the mind."

<sup>142</sup> Horace Foote, *Companion to the Theatres* (London, 1820), p. 109.

<sup>143</sup> LX (Nov., 1785), 393. In XXV (April, 1768), 314, the critic says that "the fable of an opera should not be examined too closely."

<sup>144</sup> XX (Oct., 1765), 316.

<sup>145</sup> XXIX (Jan., 1770), 71; XLIX (Jan., 1780), 74. Thomas Rymer had said that "None would think an *opera* and Civil Reason should be the growth of one and the same climate." *Short View of Tragedy* (London, 1693), p. 19. *The Bee* (No. 8) remarks that "operas seem exotic in England."

<sup>146</sup> XXVII (Jan., 1769), 80.

<sup>147</sup> XXV (April, 1768), 314.

There was a time when scarce any regard was paid to the words of a musical performance.— If the composer was excellent in his part, the audience never found fault with the songs, though they were as arrant nonsense as an Italian opera, or an English oratorio: but since the appearance of the *Duenna*, some degree of sense and harmony of numbers seems to be expected from the poet of a comic opera.<sup>148</sup>

It is not until after this period that such performances became "little better than framework for music."<sup>149</sup> The English comic opera is differentiated from its Italian equivalent, the Italian *burletta*, in which "the best authors stress music" and "the airs are the chief object, and the recitation serves only to connect them,"<sup>150</sup> for in the English type the dialogue is spoken, not sung.

The *pantomime burletta*, another development of the same type, "has no object but to make us laugh."<sup>151</sup> Another mutation is the *ballad opera*, for which, a reviewer says, "We have no great veneration."<sup>152</sup> Some idea of the popularity of musical entertainments at this time may be gained from the statement that Handel's *Messiah* was twice performed in 1757 "before the greatest assembly that ever honoured a theatre," except for Delaval's *Othello*.<sup>153</sup>

More space is devoted by the *Critical Review* to Shakespeare than to any other playwright, ancient, Elizabethan, or contemporary. There are two obvious reasons for this emphasis. To the critics he stood for unfettered genius soaring above the plodding followers of the rules, both on the Continent and in England. Moreover, the period between 1756 and 1785 was one of great Shakespearean activity, both on the stage and in the study.

The adaptations by Garrick, George Colman the Elder, and their fellow dramatists kept the Shakespeare revisions, which conformed to mid-eighteenth-century dramatic convention, on the stage.<sup>154</sup> On the other hand, Capel, Johnson, Steevens, and others were producing edition after edition of individual plays and collected works, frequently collating texts, and building the tradition of Shakespearean scholarship which has continued to the present day and of which the end is not yet in sight.

It would be interesting to know how many of the *Critical's* articles dealing with Shakespearean scholarship were from the pen of Johnson's coeditor, George Steevens. Whatever their source, they are based on sound common sense and, in some respects, a feeling for

<sup>148</sup> LIII (June, 1782), 463.

<sup>149</sup> Horace Foote: "The important parts of an opera are, that the action be short, the incidents few, but striking . . . and the plot as simple and intelligible as possible" (p. 110).

<sup>150</sup> XVII (April, 1764), 312. See XXII (Dec., 1766), 468; XVII (Feb., 1764), 312.

<sup>151</sup> XLIX (Jan., 1780), 75.

<sup>152</sup> XVI (Oct., 1763), 317. Thomson's revision is the form in which Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* was known.

<sup>153</sup> III (June, 1757), 533.

<sup>154</sup> Modern scholars have, understandably, been greatly annoyed by these "improvements" in Shakespeare, but even our short experience with televised productions should give us greater tolerance of "modernizations."

scholarship which was not to be common in research, especially Shakespearean research, until the twentieth century.

In the first place, the reviewers advocated a return to Shakespeare's text, as far as possible: "We wish to see Shakespeare in his original form except for printer's error."<sup>155</sup> Thomas Edwards, author of *The Canons of Criticism*, is reprimanded for not employing his own eyes "in collating the old editions of his author, which are undoubtedly the standards that ought to have regulated his criticisms";<sup>156</sup> and the critics express disapproval of the growing body of textual emendations with which editors of Shakespearean and other Elizabethan texts were enlarging their editions.<sup>157</sup> Sir Thomas Hanmer is decried for "mixing conjectural readings in the established text,"<sup>158</sup> although the reviewers considered that the outstanding desideratum of Shakespeare scholarship at the time was to "retrieve his language and fix the meanings which words bore in his day."<sup>159</sup> In this connection, a critic makes the statement: "As to the corruption of the ancient editions of Shakespeare's works, we believe that a true knowledge of his language would prove them to be less faulty than any which have appeared since."<sup>160</sup>

The critics believed this could be gained in two ways: first, by consulting the diction of the lower classes, since "Terms that in Shakespeare's day were familiar to a peer, are now common with a cobbler";<sup>161</sup> and second, by becoming acquainted with the language spoken near the Scottish border: "All the reading in the Vatican and Bodleian libraries is not half so useful to an editor of Shakespeare, as the conversation of an old woman in the North of England or South of Scotland, where his language is understood."<sup>162</sup> Again, we find:

Many antiquated words and phrases, which we meet with in the writers of the sixteenth century, are current at this day in some of our northern counties: and probably, on some occasions, an old woman in Westmoreland, or Cumberland, would be a better expositor of Shakespeare than Pope, Theobald, or Warburton.<sup>163</sup>

In another respect, the reviewers do not approximate so closely the opinion of modern scholars, since the eighteenth-century critics censure the study of what they thought "rubbish" contemporary with Shakespeare for the purpose of illustrating his text.<sup>164</sup> Pinkerton's comment on this subject is interesting: "As to reading masses of

<sup>155</sup> LIX (May, 1785), 344.

<sup>156</sup> XIX (March, 1765), 164.

<sup>157</sup> XIX (March, 1765), 161; XX (Dec., 1765), 457; XVI (Oct., 1763), 305; XLVII (April, 1779), 294-95.

<sup>158</sup> XXXI (April, 1771), 307. In XXX (Dec., 1770), 436, the critic advises against too frequent citation of collations.

<sup>159</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 336.

<sup>160</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 332.

<sup>161</sup> XXI (Jan., 1766), 31.

<sup>162</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 322. And see XIX (March, 1765), 162.

<sup>163</sup> XXXV (May, 1773), 356.

<sup>164</sup> XXVI (Nov., 1768), 321-33.

antique nonsense on purpose to illustrate any writer, gratitude is certainly due by the public to him who can sacrifice his very understanding in its service."<sup>165</sup> Of Samuel Johnson, however, they said that, had he been a better antiquarian, he would have made a better editor.<sup>166</sup> The lexicographer also roused the wrath of the critics for

eliminating the merits of Shakespeare according to the rules of the French Academy and the little English writers who adopted them as criterions of *taste* . . . for . . . of all our sensations, taste is the most variable and uncertain; Shakespeare is to be tried by a more certain criterion.<sup>167</sup>

Just what the reviewer considered the "more certain criterion" is not known. We do know, however, that the reviewers, as well as their contemporaries, were especially impressed by Shakespeare's dramatic "genius," an indefinable quality. Of course, he is not to be judged by the rules, which he transcended.<sup>168</sup> The reviewers also approved of Webb's idea that the dramatist's greatness comes from his neglect of the rules,<sup>169</sup> and they mention<sup>170</sup> his "splendid errors" as responsible for part of the pleasure derived from him. He is said to be "perhaps the only mortal who presided in every province of genius."<sup>171</sup> Naturally, foreigners could not understand him; the French, especially, were unable to comprehend the difference "between a poet [i.e., versifier] and a genius."<sup>172</sup> Further, he is far superior to Corneille and Racine.<sup>173</sup> Shakespeare is praised for his soundness in "philosophy and morality"<sup>174</sup> and is invoked as proof that English dramatists can ennoble tragedy from the doctrines of Christianity.<sup>175</sup> As to learning, he was praised for his knowledge of the classical languages<sup>176</sup> and for his lack of it!<sup>177</sup>

With all this adulation, however, there are some strictures, although the blame for any defects is usually shifted from the dramatist's shoulders. His "quibbling and low wit," for instance, is blamed on the popular taste of his times;<sup>178</sup> Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont, and

<sup>165</sup> *Letters*, p. 178.

<sup>166</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 322.

<sup>167</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 322.

<sup>168</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 322; XIX (April, 1765), 301, where he is called "the sun of genius"; XXVII (May, 1769), 353.

<sup>169</sup> XIII (May, 1762), 404. And see XLI (March, 1776), 215, where he is said to owe his success to "his never having heard of Aristotle's unities or read Horace's *De Arte*."

<sup>170</sup> LVII (Feb., 1784), 107.

<sup>171</sup> XIX (May, 1765), 321.

<sup>172</sup> XXVII (May, 1769), 351.

<sup>173</sup> XXII (Dec., 1766), 425: "We must confess that we still prefer the nature and luxuriance of Shakespeare to the applauded sublimity of Corneille and exactness of Racine."

<sup>174</sup> XXXIX (March, 1775), 203.

<sup>175</sup> XXIX (Feb., 1770), 152: "Shakespeare, in many places, ennobled his drama from the Christian religion."

<sup>176</sup> XX (Oct., 1765), 331: "Did Ben Jonson really say that Shakespeare had small Latin and as little Greek? If he did, we do not believe him."

<sup>177</sup> XXVII (May, 1769), 357.

<sup>178</sup> LIX (Jan., 1785), 24.

Fletcher are cited to show that he is not the "standard and original of bad taste."<sup>179</sup> One reviewer says, "Nothing less than a genius like Shakespeare's could make plays wrote to the taste of those Elizabethan times pleasing now."<sup>180</sup>

As to acting versions of the Shakespeare plays, the attitude of eighteenth-century critics seemed, in a way, more healthy and practical than ours is now, as far as the scholarly world is concerned. They felt that, although it was not wise to tamper with the text in complete editions, some revision was necessary for theatrical representation because of the changes which had taken place in both the physical facilities of the theater and the audience itself, to whom much of the original would not have been intelligible. In this light, the alterations by Marsh, Garrick, Colman, and their fellows are part of a rather laudable attempt at popularization.

Whatever may be the reader's approach, however, the heresy of the *Critical* in this regard was not great. The critics were, in general, opposed to the alteration of Shakespeare's text. An early reviewer writes, "It is impossible for us to view the father of the English stage thus cruelly mangled and unhappily pieced without regret."<sup>181</sup> Of Garrick's *Catherine and Petruchio*, the critic says, "He must have a great taste and infinite veneration for Shakespeare, who thus fritters his plays into farces."<sup>182</sup> In two plays, however, the reviewers admitted that revision was necessary. The first of these, *The Winter's Tale*, met with disfavor in its original form because of "the dreadful fate that befel Antigonus and the ship's crew, which creates a confusion of tragedy and comedy and destroys the propriety of the composition."<sup>183</sup> Despite what he considered to be an actual necessity for revision, however, this critic refers to the practice in general:

The practice of altering Shakespeare is like that of mending an old Roman causeway by the hands of a modern pavement not undertaken for use or convenience. A man of true taste will have more pleasure in seeing the ruins of a Grecian temple than in examining all the commodities of the nearest box in Hackney, or in Hammersmith; even the irregularity of some Gothic edifices exhibits a rude, stupendous grandeur, which notwithstanding all its incorrectness, strikes the beholder with admiration and awe.<sup>184</sup>

The other play which, according to the *Critical*, stood in need of alteration was *Lear*, though here again the critic advances with extreme caution: "Lear has derived little advantage from the efforts of those who endeavoured to remove its imperfections, but we still prefer the happy conclusion; reason opposes it, while the tortured feelings at once decide the contest."<sup>185</sup> The revision of this play which was

<sup>179</sup> XXII (July, 1766), 54.

<sup>180</sup> VIII (July, 1759), 87.

<sup>181</sup> I (March, 1756), 147.

<sup>182</sup> I (March, 1756), 146.

<sup>183</sup> I (March, 1756), 145.

<sup>184</sup> I (March, 1756), 144.

<sup>185</sup> LVIII (July, 1784), 79.

accorded most favorable comment was that by George Colman the Elder in 1768.<sup>186</sup>

In view of the fierce arguments destined to distinguish later studies of Shakespeare's characters, of which the early stages were appearing in the essays of Morgann, Richardson, and their fellows, it is interesting to note the attitude of the *Critical* with regard to the *dramatis personae*. In the first place, the reviewers believe that Shakespeare's characters should be considered as characters, not real people,<sup>187</sup> an attitude to which we are just returning after a century and a half of, for the most part, misdirected energy. As characters, they please "by the command which their author has over the affections and passions, over the tender, the rational, and risible faculties of mankind. They are from the genius of the poet, which is so strong that it converts even absurdity into nature."<sup>188</sup> The dramatist is censured, however, because "there are an hundred characters in his plays that . . . speak out of character."<sup>189</sup>

In common with many of their contemporaries, the reviewers are most enthusiastic about Falstaff, who is, according to one critic, "the most original character that ever appeared."<sup>190</sup> Probably the best summary of the *Critical's* attitude toward dramatic characters in general, and those of Shakespeare in particular, appears in the review of Richardson's *Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of Some of Shakespeare's Characters*:

As dramatic poetry contains a representation of the sentiments and conduct of mankind in various situations, when carefully copied from nature it affords the most complete and striking picture of the human mind that can possibly be delineated. . . . Whoever, therefore, would investigate the nature and principles of the heart, cannot accomplish his design with more success than by studying the various characters as they are faithfully exhibited by the eminent masters in the drama. Among these our immortal Shakespeare is the most distinguished for his knowledge of human nature, and the portraits which he has drawn will always continue to be admired for their justness and originality.<sup>191</sup>

Thus we have seen that throughout the period from 1756 to 1785, the reviewers for the *Critical* approached the drama with moral, patriotic, and stage standards which affected their treatment of plays, both English and foreign. In general, the drama, like all other forms of literature, is supposed to improve the morals of both spectators and readers. For this purpose, poetic justice should be followed where possible, and vice painted in most unattractive colors. Bourgeois char-

<sup>186</sup> Reviewed in XXV (Feb., 1768), 148-49. Another aspect of the mixture of genres is mentioned by Colman in his Preface: "I had once some idea of retaining the Fool, but after the most serious consideration, I was convinced that such a character in a tragedy would not be endured on the modern stage." Quoted by G. C. D. Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* (New York, 1920), I, 380.

<sup>187</sup> LVII (Feb., 1784), 101-102.

<sup>188</sup> XX (Nov., 1765), 324. See *The Adventurer*, No. 92.

<sup>189</sup> I (April, 1756), 234.

<sup>190</sup> XIX (May, 1765), 324.

<sup>191</sup> XXXVII (May, 1774), 334.

acters are allowed in tragedy, because the audience of the period will identify themselves more closely with such protagonists. The English dramatists, especially Shakespeare, are preferred to the versifying French or the insipid Italians. Closet drama begins to assume the importance which it had from the 1770's until the 1890's. Above all, the critics are characterized by common sense.

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#### CAIRO STUDIES IN ENGLISH

The appearance of the first issue of the *Cairo Studies in English* is an informal announcement that the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Middle East intend to maintain their membership in the universal brotherhood of scholars. This journal, which is a resurgence from the defunct *Annual Bulletin*, with a change in title and geographical scope, will now appear as an occasional publication issued by the members of the English department of the University of Cairo under the general editorship of Magdi Wahba. Its material will be research studies in the literature and language of the English-speaking world done by the teaching staff of the English departments in the universities of the United Arab Republic.

This first number contains nine articles contributed by visiting professors from abroad and lecturers in English at the universities of Cairo and Alexandria. These papers treat of familiar topics in the poetry and drama of English literature. The paper of most interest to the Western mind is one entitled "The Wheel of Fortune," wherein is brought to the fore the difference between the European and the Arab imaginations, showing how much the former relies upon the visual—upon painting, personification, and visually conceived allegory—whereas the latter "has turned more readily to the more purely linguistic instruments, sometimes enshrining the very same concepts in an expressive verbal derivation from the basic roots in its vocabulary."

It is well for us to get a glimpse of the Arab way of thinking as it expresses itself in the world of letters, and it is to be hoped that the Arab mind will take ample occasion to mingle its cultural patterns with our own.

EDWARD G. COX

## A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRITICAL ARTHURIAN LITERATURE FOR THE YEAR 1958

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ADA</i>	Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur
<i>Archiv</i>	Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen
<i>AUMLA</i>	Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association
<i>BA</i>	Books Abroad
<i>BBCS</i>	Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies
<i>BBSIA</i>	Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne
<i>Beiträge</i> (Halle)	Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur (Halle)
<i>Beiträge</i> (Tübingen)	Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur (Tübingen)
<i>BHR</i>	Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance
<i>BRAE</i>	Boletín de la Real Academia Española
<i>CCM</i>	Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale (Xe-XII <sup>e</sup> Siècles) (Univ. de Poitiers)
<i>CE</i>	College English
<i>CL</i>	Comparative Literature
<i>CN</i>	Cultura Neolatina
<i>DA</i>	Dissertation Abstracts
<i>DAEM</i>	Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters
<i>DLZ</i>	Deutsche Literaturzeitung
<i>DU</i>	Der Deutschunterricht (Stuttgart)
<i>DVLG</i>	Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte
<i>EA</i>	Études Anglaises
<i>EC</i>	Études Celtiques
<i>EG</i>	Études Germaniques
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review
<i>EIC</i>	Essays in Criticism
<i>ELH</i>	Journal of English Literary History
<i>ES</i>	English Studies (Amsterdam)
<i>FiR</i>	Filologia Romanza
<i>FR</i>	French Review
<i>FS</i>	French Studies
<i>GL&amp;L</i>	German Life and Letters
<i>GQ</i>	German Quarterly
<i>GR</i>	Germanic Review
<i>GRM</i>	Germanisch-romantische Monatsschrift, Neue Folge
<i>GSLI</i>	Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana
<i>HR</i>	Hispanic Review

It is a pleasure to acknowledge indebtedness to my colleagues on the Bibliography Committee of the Modern Language Association, and to the *BBSIA*. Although I have taken no items directly from the *MLA* Bibliography or the *BBSIA*, I have used both for checking purposes, and each has called my attention to items that I might have overlooked. Except in one instance (No. 4628, which is taken from a review), each item that I have not been able to see personally has been based upon from two to nine reviews or bibliographical sources. I am indebted to Professor Roach, as usual, for verifying the data on certain new books. Expenses on the bibliography were defrayed by a grant from the Committee on Research, Temple University.

<i>JAF</i>	Journal of American Folklore
<i>JCS</i>	Journal of Celtic Studies
<i>JEGP</i>	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
<i>KFLQ</i>	Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly
<i>LBB</i>	Leuvense Bijdragen (Bijblad) ('sGravenhage)
<i>LI</i>	Lettore Italiane
<i>LM</i>	Les Langues Modernes
<i>LR</i>	Les Lettres Romanes
<i>MA</i>	Le Moyen Age
<i>MAE</i>	Medium Ævum
<i>MF</i>	Midwest Folklore
<i>MLJ</i>	Modern Language Journal
<i>MLN</i>	Modern Language Notes
<i>MLQ</i>	Modern Language Quarterly
<i>MLR</i>	Modern Language Review
<i>MP</i>	Modern Philology
<i>MS</i>	Mediaeval Studies
<i>NA</i>	Nuova Antologia di Lettere, Arti e Scienze
<i>N&amp;Q</i>	Notes and Queries
<i>NM</i>	Neophilologische Mitteilungen
<i>NS</i>	Die Neueren Sprachen
<i>PMLA</i>	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
<i>QJS</i>	Quarterly Journal of Speech
<i>RBPH</i>	Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire
<i>RES</i>	Review of English Studies
<i>RF</i>	Romanische Forschungen
<i>RFE</i>	Revista de Filología Espagnola
<i>RJ</i>	Romanistisches Jahrbuch
<i>RLC</i>	Revue de Littérature Comparée
<i>RLI</i>	La Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana
<i>RLR</i>	Revue des Langues Romanes (Montpellier)
<i>RP</i>	Romance Philology
<i>RR</i>	Romanic Review
<i>SAQ</i>	South Atlantic Quarterly
<i>SDDUW</i>	Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations, University of Wisconsin
<i>SF</i>	Studi Francesi
<i>SFQ</i>	Southern Folklore Quarterly
<i>SN</i>	Studia Neophilologica
<i>SP</i>	Studies in Philology
<i>THSC</i>	Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion
<i>TLS</i>	[London] Times Literary Supplement
<i>TSE</i>	Texas Studies in English
<i>UTQ</i>	University of Toronto Quarterly
<i>WJ</i>	Wolfram-Jahrbuch
<i>WuW</i>	Welt und Wort
<i>WW</i>	Wirkendes Wort
<i>WZUJ</i>	Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe
<i>YR</i>	Yale Review
<i>YWES</i>	Year's Work in English Studies
<i>YWMLS</i>	Year's Work in Modern Language Studies
<i>ZAA</i>	Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
<i>ZCP</i>	Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie
<i>ZDA</i>	Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur
<i>ZDP</i>	Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie
<i>ZFSL</i>	Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur
<i>ZRP</i>	Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie

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## INDEX

Albrecht von Scharfenberg, *Der jüngere Titurél*, 4518.  
 Allegory, 4470, 4486.  
*Amadis de Gaula*, 4552, 4574, 4598.  
*Andreas Capellanus*, 4567; *De amore*, 4537.  
 Anglo-Saxon bibliography, 4477.  
*Annotated*, 4589.  
*Ariosto*, *Orlando Furioso*, 4485, 4593, 4618.  
*Arnold*, Matthew, *Tristram and Iseult*, 4467.  
 Arthur, 3893 (Starr), 4299 (Ashe), 4464, 4523, 4547, 4557, 4595.  
*Arthuriana*, 4477, 4531.  
 Arthurian bibliography, 4473, 4482, 4522, 4565, 4583, 4587, 4588, 4632; Congress, 4625; contemporary literature, 3893 (Starr); legend, 4201 (Loomis), 4436 (de Séchelles), 4560; nineteenth-century literature, 4612; romance, 4562; romances, 3323a (Emmel), 4466; prose romances, 4475; sites, 4477, 4497, 4536; tradition, 4558.  
 Arthur's shield, 4590.  
 Arthur's sword, 4526, 4623.  
 Avalon, 4299 (Ashe).  
*Baladro del sabio Merlin*, 4476.  
 Béroul, 4468; *Tristan*, 4500, 4504, 4541, 4551.  
 Bibliography, 3827 (Kuhn), 4466, 4473, 4477, 4482, 4522, 4545, 4546, 4565, 4583, 4587, 4598, 4616.  
 Bors, 4563.  
 Branwen, 4564.  
*Breton lais*, 4466.  
 Britain, 4237 (Rickard).  
 British history, 4557.  
 Caxton, William, 4608.  
 Celtic bibliography, 4477, 4583; hagiography, 4516; literature, 4466; origin of "Matière de Bretagne," 4559.  
 Chaucer, 4369 (Kleinstück), 4404 (Muscantine), 4593, 4604; bibliography, 3978 (Griffith); *Wife of Bath's Tale*, 4335 (Eisner).  
*Chrétien de Troyes*, 3807 (Guyer), 3812 (Hofer), 4344 (Frappier), 4457 (Ziltener), 4468, 4469, 4520, 4528, 4535, 4543, 4550, 4554, 4604, 4624, 4627; *Chevalier de la Charrette*, 4599, 4600; *Cligés*, 4398 (Micha); *Conte du Graal*, 4244 (Roach), 4422 (de Riquer), 4506, 4509, 4530, 4566; *Erec et Enide*, 4487, 4505, 4525; *Yvain*, 4540, 4594. *Chronicles*, 4470, 4503, 4605.  
 Clemens, Samuel L., *A Connecticut Yankee*, 4576.  
*Conte du Mantel*, 4532.

Cornwall, 4497.  
 Courtly literature, 4187 (Köhler), 4404 (Muscantine); love, 4274 (Weigand), 4340 (Fisher), 4349 (Furstner), 4537.  
 Crashaw, Richard, 4593.  
*Croniques admirables du Gargantua*, 4153 (Françon).  
 Dryden, John, *King Arthur*, 4593.  
 Eilhart von Oberge, *Eneide*, 4589; *Tristrant*, 4500, 4554, 4589.  
 Eleanor of Aquitaine, 4554.  
 Eliot, T. S., 4260 (Smith); *The Waste Land*, 4512, 4580, 4593, 4622.  
 English bibliography, 4466, 4565, 4587, 4588, 4616; literature, 4593; medieval literature, 4431 (Schlauch); medieval poetry, 4440 (Speirs); see also individual authors and works.  
 Enid, 4481.  
*Estoire de Lancelot*, 4475.  
*Estoire de Merlin*, 4475.  
 European epic, 4447 (Wais); literature, 4328 (Curtius).  
 Evans, Sebastian, 4495.  
 Faral, Edmond, 4465, 4493, 4596.  
*Folie Tristan*, 4500.  
 Folklore, 4265 (Thompson), 4490, 4519, 4558, 4602, 4610.  
 Frank, István, 4570.  
 French bibliography, 4522, 4632; language, 4535; medieval literature, 3913 (Zumthor), 4136 (Crosland), 4237 (Rickard), 4269 (Valkhoff), 4404 (Muscantine), 4548, 4550, 4556, 4601, 4614; see also individual authors and works.  
 Frocin, 4494.  
 Gawain, 4422 (de Riquer), 4458, 4459, 4505, 4508, 4539, 4579, 4604.  
 Gawain-poet, 4252 (Savage), 4496, 4607.  
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 4477; *Historia Regum Britanniae*, 4495, 4531, 4605.  
 Geraint, Welsh, 4525.  
 German bibliography, 4545, 4546; bibliography, 4527; literature, 4322 (Closs), 4511; medieval literature, 3830 (Langosch), 4589; see also individual authors and works.  
 Gildas, 4477; *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, 4516.  
 Glastonbury, 4299 (Ashe).  
 Gotfrid Hagens Reimchronik, 4589.  
 Gottfried von Strassburg, 4478; *Tristan und Isolde*, 4500, 4502, 4517, 4542, 4617, 4619.  
 Grail, 4406 (Nitze), 4436 (de Séchelles), 4490, 4501, 4514, 4571, 4577, 4591, 4611; origin, 4568; poetry, 3323a (Emmel); romances, 4245 (*Romans*), 4622.  
 Guerau de Cabrera, 4487.  
 Guinevere, 4544.  
 Hartmann von Aue, 4569; *Erec*, 2011 (Leitzmann), 4630.  
 Hawaii, 4561.  
 Herzeloide, 4529.  
 Holden, Anthony John, 4543.  
 Hovey, Richard, 4387 (Macdonald).  
*Ianuals Ijoð*, 4603.  
 Irish literature, 4133 (Carney), 4564.  
 Iseult, 4489, 4541, 4542.  
 Islam, 4591.  
 Italian influence, 4069 (Sells); literature, 4593; see also individual authors.  
 Knevet, Ralph, *Supplement of the Faery Queene*, 4553.  
 Lais, 4466.  
*Lancelot*, 4148 (Foulon).  
*Lancelot*, French prose, 4367 (Kennedy), 4615.  
*Lancelot*, Middle High German prose, 4615.  
*Lancelot*, Netherlandic prose, 4621.  
 Langland, William, 4524.  
*Landval*, 4474.  
 La Villemarque, Hersart de, *Barzaz-Breiz*, 4601.  
 Layamon, *Brut*, 4491, 4605.  
 Lejeune, Rita, 4506.  
 Levy, R., 4614.  
 Llywarch Hen, 4481.  
 Lot-Borodine, Myrrha, 4573.  
*Mabinogion*, 4447 (Wais), 4519, 4526, 4562, 4564, 4613.  
 Machiavelli, 4593.  
 Malory, Sir Thomas, 4479, 4563, 4587, 4612; *Morte Darthur*, 4608.  
 Mantel, 4498, 4532.  
*Mantel mautaillé*, 4483.  
 Marie de Champagne, 4554.  
 Marie de France, 4468, 4550, 4604, 4606, 4624; *Lai du Chevrefeuille*, 4507; *Lai de Landval*, 4603.  
 Mark, King, 4504, 4585.  
 Medieval heroic narrative, 4491; ro-

mances, 4303 (Bianchini), 4381  
(Loomis); literature, 4562.  
Meljanz, 4578.  
Merlin, 4476, 4601, 4629.  
*Mort Artu*, 4475.  
*Mort le roi Artu, La*, 4535.  
*Morte Arthure*, alliterative, 4491,  
4586.  
Mount Badon, 4536.  
Myrrdin, 4629.  
Nennius, 4477.  
*Nibelungenlied*, 4447 (Wais).  
Nitze, William A., 4013 (Malkiel),  
4597.  
Obie, 4578.  
Oedipus complex, 4471.  
*Parcevals* (Old Norse) Saga, 4577.  
Parzival, 4518, 4538, 4579, 4610.  
Perceval, 4422 (de Riquer), 4530.  
*Perceval* continuations, 3158 (Roach),  
4508.  
*Perlesvaus*, 4535.  
*Piers Plowman*, 4524.  
*Ponsela Gaia*, 4620.  
Praemonstratensian Order, 4566.  
Pulci, Luigi, *Morgante*, 4204  
(Mariani), 4485.  
*Pwyll Pendueuc Dwyet*, 4613.  
*Queste del Saint Graal*, 4475, 4535,  
4548.  
Ravens, 4562.  
Red Book of Hergest, 4613.  
*Rhonabwy's Dream*, 4526, 4562.  
Rigaut de Barbezieux, 4555.  
Robert, Brother, 4500.  
Robert de Boron, 4476, 4535, 4548;  
prose *Merlin*, 4572.  
Robinson, E. A., 4459.  
*Romance Philology*, 4534.  
*Saga*, 4562.  
Sala, Pierre, *Tristan*, 4582.  
Scotland, 4560.  
Shakespeare, 4592.  
*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,  
4458, 4513, 4515.  
*Sir Orfeo*, 4602.  
Spenser, Edmund, *The Faerie Queene*,  
4107 (Arthos), 4470, 4486, 4523,  
4524, 4592, 4593.  
*Suite du Merlin*, 4631.  
Taliesin, 4628, 4629.  
Tasso, Torquato, *Gerusalemme  
liberata*, 4593.  
Tennyson, Alfred, *Idylls of the King*,  
4484, 4544, 4575.  
Thomas of Britain, *Tristan*, 4487,  
4500, 4542.  
*Tristan*, 4340 (Fisher).  
*Tristan and Iseult*, 4460, 4471, 4488,  
4500, 4511, 4521, 4550.  
*Tristano Corsiniano*, 4462.  
*Tristan*, prose, 3376 (Curtis), 4475,  
4492.  
Troubadour poetry, 4487, 4488, 4555.  
Vergil, *Aeneid*, 4457 (Ziltener).  
*Viatge de Raimon de Perillos*, 4483.  
Vostaert, Penninc en Pieter, *Wale-  
wein en het Schaakboord*, 4499.  
Wace, 4535; *Roman de Brut*, 4605;  
*Roman de Rou*, 4543.  
Wagner, Richard, 4472, 4533, 4626;  
*Tristan und Isolde*, 4511.  
Wales, 4201 (Loomis), 4583.  
Welsh legend, 4628; literature, 4480;  
poetry, 4279 (Williams); see also  
individual titles.  
Werner der Gartenaere, *Meier  
Helmbrrecht*, 4617.  
Weston, Jessie L., *From Ritual to  
Romance*, 4622.  
White Book of Rhydderch, 4613.  
White, T. H., *The Once and Future  
King*, 4463, 4510, 4595.  
Williams, Charles, 4581.  
Winchester M.S., 4608.  
Wirnt von Grafenberg, *Wigalois*,  
4502.  
Wolfram von Eschenbach, 4584; *Par-  
sival*, 4089 (Wapnewski), 4419  
(Richey), 4502, 4518, 4529, 4538,  
4539, 4549, 4578, 4579, 4591, 4609,  
4610.

## A TRAGIC VIEW OF THOMAS MANN

By WILLIAM H. REY

Erich Heller made himself widely known as a challenging critic and a brilliant writer when in 1952 he published a collection of his articles on classical and modern literature under the telling title *The Disinherited Mind*. His new study again demonstrates his keen and penetrating intelligence, his wealth of factual information, and his verbal virtuosity which manifests itself in striking and witty formulations. It is clearly an important book of unmistakable stature which will have its impact even on those who fail to be convinced. The figure of Thomas Mann, here displayed against the background of modern European literary and intellectual history, assumes a symptomatic significance and is made to appear as the prototype of what Heller conceives to be the modern artist.\*

It is here that this presentation reveals its problematic character. Heller's previous essays, especially those on Rilke and Kafka, made it quite clear that, in his opinion, the situation of the modern writer is marked by inescapable tragedy. The writer, more than any other representative of contemporary man, has to suffer the agony of the modern disinherited mind which results from the disintegration of the Christian heritage during the last centuries. With belief in God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer gone, the absolute is lost and the objective order of things destroyed. The world turns into a nightmare of relativities, ironies, ambiguities, and absurdities, and the transcendental vacuum is invaded by the forces of Evil.

The sovereign poetic imagination ignores the reality of divine transcendence, and, therefore, all its attempts to restore the shattered Creation are bound to fail. Similarly, the humanistic myth of man as the redeemer of himself proves to be a religious absurdity. Thus, according to Heller's pessimistic philosophy of history, the disintegration of the Christian heritage inevitably leads to the triumph of Hell. Heller, therefore, does not hesitate to interpret Kafka's *Castle* and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* as prominent literary documents of the catastrophe of modern art and modern man. The severity of his verdict on modern history has its counterpart in the rigor of his aesthetic condemnation. In a recent article in the German periodical *Merkur*, Heller reaffirms the aesthetic principles which he had put forward in his essay on "Rilke and Nietzsche" (*The Disinherited Mind*, pp. 99 ff.). In the light of these principles, the artistic worth of so-called "confessional poetry" (such as that of Rilke) depends on

\* Erich Heller, *The Ironic German: A Study of Thomas Mann* (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), pp. 298.

the author's religious beliefs. If these beliefs contradict tradition (and by this Heller uniquely means the Christian tradition), a perversion of the "sacramental" character of reality necessarily results which precludes the creation of great art.

Limitations of space do not permit an extensive discussion of Heller's aesthetics. Our outline, brief as it is, may make it apparent how in his writings broad vision and great intellectual sophistication are joined with a most dogmatic point of view. It is by reference to Heller's central dogma that his occasionally startling aesthetic evaluations of Thomas Mann's works become comprehensible to the reader. In contrast to his polemical treatment of Rilke and Kafka, Heller discovers in Thomas Mann's writings various opportunities for conditional affirmation. As is to be expected, the critic finds himself in agreement with the writer whenever the tragic aspects of modern art are displayed. His presentation, therefore, emphasizes figures like Hanno Buddenbrook, Gustave Aschenbach, and Adrian Leverkühn.

Consonant with his desire to establish the catastrophe of modern art as the main theme in Thomas Mann's work, he attributes a cyclical pattern to each of the two decisive stages of the author's development. The period of youth and the period of maturity are held to follow this pattern in that each begins and ends on a note of despair with the creative imagination. The first period dates from the publication of *Buddenbrooks* at the beginning of the twentieth century. This novel in the tradition of Schopenhauer deals with the metaphysical conflict between Life and Spirit and culminates in the renunciation of the artist as represented by Hanno. During the next decade, Thomas Mann's attempts to discover a moral justification for his art, according to Heller, fall short of ultimate success. Thus, *Death in Venice* appears to him as the perfectly constructed artistic monument of this failure. Here, in his "first tragic allegory of art" (p. 105), Thomas Mann "has closed the circle of doubts besetting his moral existence as a writer. . . . The circle seems to be as vicious as can be . . ." (p. 115).

But Aschenbach, whose story allegedly contains "so radical a critique of art that it amounts to its moral rejection" (p. 114), is, in Heller's view, merely an anticipation of Adrian, the tragic artist par excellence, the "representative victim" of the "catastrophe of the human soul" (p. 273). As the "tragic parody of the first Frankfurt Faustbook of 1587" (p. 274), revoking Goethe's *Faust*, *Doctor Faustus* demonstrates Thomas Mann's "despairing return to Schopenhauer's pessimism" (p. 30). With this fatal and final work the author's development has run its full course and has taken him back to his point of departure. Leverkühn's personal collapse and artistic failure, according to Heller, reveals the dire prospects of modern art. The conflict between Life and Spirit is finally resolved: not in Schopenhauer's "vacuum of 'nothingness,'" but in "the unison of Hell."

This, comments Erich Heller, "is at least one conclusion, and not the most unfitting one, to Schopenhauer's metaphysical story . . ." (p. 261). Thus the curse of modern literature has fully revealed itself. The epoch which began with the romantic belief in art as salvation and in the artist as the redeemer of the world ends with the agonizing realization that the hubris of the creative imagination must lead to the damnation of the creator.

Confronted with this apocalyptic prospect, we may well ask: Is this really Thomas Mann's message? Does the greatest of his last works, his *Parsifal*, as he called it, spell nothing but despair? There is certainly a good deal of truth in whatever Erich Heller says, but it is only half of the truth, and it is the less significant part of it. Heller's presentation of *Doctor Faustus* necessarily remains inadequate because his preconceived pessimistic dogmatism does not permit him to do justice to the intrinsic dialectical structure of this complex novel. He is completely blind to the paradoxical coincidence of victim and victor, sinner and savior, in the figure of Adrian. Nor has he any understanding for the miracle which occurs in Adrian's last composition, where from the diabolically inspired extremes of intellectuality and primitivism rises the cry of the soul, which simultaneously voices the human and the divine lament. This ultimate religious paradox derives from the dialectical relationship between the diabolic and the divine which obtains in the later works of Thomas Mann. It comes about only through the utter self-sacrifice of the artist—the holy sinner. Heller's book takes care of this crucial matter by the laconic and preposterous statement, "The Devil has done his work and granted a soul" (p. 275).

Heller ignores the fact that *Death in Venice*, as well as *Doctor Faustus*, describes the tragedy and the transfiguration of the artist. The cathartic effect of Thomas Mann's self-castigation in his "greatest Novelle" (p. 98), its Werther-function, as it were, is overlooked, and no consideration is given to the relationship which pairs the contrasting figures of Aschenbach and Schiller (*A Weary Hour*), Adrian and Gregorius. (In this connection, one misses an interpretation of *The Holy Sinner*.) To be sure, the "creative aspect of negation" (p. 35) is duly emphasized in the analysis of *Buddenbrooks*, but Heller does not concede the prominence of this Goethean principle of dynamic dialectics in Thomas Mann's entire work. His emphasis on the recurrent themes of destructive knowledge, doubt, and despair causes him to lose sight of the fundamental motif of love, which runs through Thomas Mann's work from *The Hungry* and *Tonio Kräger* to *Doctor Faustus*. These various instances of love should certainly not be attributed indiscriminately to what Heller criticizes as a pathological Dionysian Eros. Characteristically enough, when Heller deals with *Doctor Faustus*, he never mentions Adrian's relationship to his nephew, Nepomuk-Echo, the representative of innocence and love, nor the significance of this divine child for Adrian's artistic creation.

Heller's chapter on *The Magic Mountain* takes the unusual but highly significant form of a dialogue between Q., the questioner, and A., who is to supply the answers. By applying the ironical perspectives of "yes" and "no" to the work of an ironical writer, Heller reveals how deeply he himself is influenced by the very same *Zeitgeist* which he pretends to oppose with his radical dogmatism. The author's intention, however, "to clear the ground for affirmation by letting someone else gather up the questions" (p. 169) is carried out in part only. Q., to be sure, is given ample opportunity to express Heller's (and not only Heller's) lament about the "curse of our godless but oh! so 'religious' literature" (p. 192). Fed up with "all this romantic fuss about the aspects, and about mixing them, and about the ironical experiments, and about the duplicity of angles" (p. 195), he succumbs to no less romantic a nostalgia, the yearning "for those healthy times" which still believed in "one clear and sensible truth" (p. 193). A., on the other hand, duly stresses the perfect integration of *The Magic Mountain* as "a militant measure in defense of form" (p. 190), which, ironically enough, contradicts the leitmotiv of dissolution and decay. But he neglects the fundamental anthropocentric idea of this "parable of Man" (p. 190), the spiritual source of Thomas Mann's artistic determination. Hans Castorp's dream is taken care of in ten lines, and the most emphatic sentence of the whole novel ("For the sake of goodness and love, man shall let death have no sovereignty over his thoughts") is completely ignored.

We wonder why. Did the author shrink from saying what he should have said: that this love of which Hans Castorp speaks is the same love which Tonio Kröger feels and which is revealed to Thomas Buddenbrook in his nightly vision; that it is, according to Heller's interpretation, "a profoundly impossible love, a love in a world without love" (p. 63), i.e., a purely human love without the sanction of divine grace? Did the author try to conceal the verdict which a strict application of his aesthetic dogma would entail: that, in spite of its formal perfection, *The Magic Mountain* cannot be a great work of art because it is based on Thomas Mann's pessimistic humanism rather than on orthodox Christian belief?

*Joseph and His Brothers* at last provides Erich Heller with an opportunity of escape from his inner conflict between artistic admiration and religious reserve. His interpretation of "Thomas Mann's longest and greatest book" (p. 16) reveals him as a romantic in spite of himself. In his discussion of Friedrich Schlegel's aesthetic principles and prophecies, a generous sampling of which is offered in order to show Thomas Mann as "the perfect Romantic of Schlegel's expectation" (p. 202), an attitude of marked critical detachment still prevails. He mistrusts the great romantic dream of that ultimate transformation of supreme consciousness to new innocence which would bridge the gulf between the objective tradition and the subjectivity of the artist.

When he comes to deal with *Joseph*, however, a remarkable change of tone is in evidence. He now concedes "that Schlegel's utopian literary hopes [for the re-emergence of the myth] may be fulfilled" (p. 218). As an artist, to be sure, the author of the novel remains true to his age, arranging an "intricate play of irony, psychology, archaeology, and anthropology." But "in the end the mythic truth emerges from Thomas Mann's vast elaboration . . ." (p. 218). In this way, the great romantic dream has come true after all. The disinherited mind has found its way back to the lost heritage. If *Buddenbrooks* is Thomas Mann's "first allegory of the Fall of Man" (p. 13) through destructive knowledge, *Joseph* must strike Erich Heller as an allegory of paradise regained through true belief.

Is it really the true belief? Heller, alas, goes to some length to persuade himself of it. He extols the theological irony which permeates the novel as "the apotheosis of all previous ironies" (p. 234) but is reluctant to acknowledge the myths of a divine Creator and His creation as but transcendental projections of the artist and his problems. But, at least, there is transcendence and there is theology, "albeit of a heretical brand" (p. 234), and thus Heller can find Thomas Mann possessed of humor in Kierkegaard's sense, which places him "at the approaches of faith" (p. 238). Even if the writer himself stopped short of embracing the true faith, this novel is said to bear witness to it. "For this work never loses sight of the 'still greater story' of which, as Pascal perceived, the story of Joseph is a secular anticipation . . ." (p. 256). This appreciation of Joseph as a mundane anticipation of the Redeemer, which the orthodox critic finds implicit in the novel, forms the basis of his reconciliation with the ironic author.

We need not disturb this paradisian idyll by asking whether Erich Heller does not read a bit too much of Pascal into Thomas Mann. It does not matter in the end. From his point of view, after all, *Joseph and His Brothers* as well as *The Beloved Returns* (which is only briefly mentioned) are no more than passing episodes in Thomas Mann's circular journey back to despair.

The hasty suggestions of a happy end to Thomas Mann's life story in the last chapter of Heller's book carry little weight when they are matched with his interpretation of *Doctor Faustus* and the vision of a final catastrophe of man, art, and civilization, which it attributes to the author. Without due emphasis on the element of promise in Adrian's artistic achievement, without full consideration of Gre-gorius as a complementary figure, *Felix Krull* cannot possibly be made to appear as the "comedy of genius" (p. 284), which brings "relief from tragedy" (p. 285), but must seem a sinister masterpiece of cynical self-mockery. Heller's last chapter, which tries to coördinate *Doctor Faustus* and *Felix Krull*, was obviously written in order to distract the reader from the grimmer aspects of his philosophy of art and history. But this conciliatory gesture which bestows "the

blessings of the comic muse" (p. 284) upon an author who, according to Heller, has sentenced the artist (and thus himself) to eternal damnation, comes too late to be effective. It is our impression that Erich Heller's predilection for tragedy has caused him to stray from his theme. He set out to present Thomas Mann as the ironic German but was not able to do justice to the scope of his irony.

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## COMIC AND GROTESQUE ELEMENTS IN ERNST BARLACH

By EDSON M. CHICK

Wolfgang Kayser's *Das Groteske: Seine Gestaltung in Malerei und Dichtung*,<sup>1</sup> to which this article is heavily in debt, makes only passing reference to Ernst Barlach the graphic artist, and leaves Barlach the dramatist unmentioned. Yet to judge only by the repeated use of the word *grotesk* in Paul Fechter's *Ernst Barlach*,<sup>2</sup> one need not look far in any direction to find grotesque elements. From the ridiculous, disgusting, early drawing entitled "Liebespaar"<sup>3</sup>—two, fat, smirking, walrus-like figures reclining on bulbous pillows that seem a part of their bodies, the male fondling the female's breast while she looks at him with dull expectancy—to the more horrifying "Gott Bauch" in *Die Wandlungen Gottes* (1922); from the eating of the horse in *Der Tote Tag* (1912) to cannibalism in *Der Findling* (1922) and the "Teufelsküche" scene in *Der blaue Boll* (1926), they are there, a dominant characteristic of Barlach's work.

His letters, too, betray a preoccupation with grotesque humor from as early as 1895 in a homesick letter from Paris with its remarks on "der siegreiche deutsche Geist": "Wahrlich nicht die Schönheit und Lieblichkeit ist unsere Stärke, unsere Kraft, eher das Gegenteil, die Häßlichkeit, dämonische Leidenschaft und die groteske Genialität der Größe, vor allem der Humor mit seinem Heer von originellen Gestalten."<sup>4</sup> And later (1928) to say, "Es ist ein Berg Humor in der Sündflut . . .,"<sup>5</sup> is to confess a view of humor which practically identifies it with the grotesque.

There is, therefore, as little need for cataloging instances and episodes to prove the existence of grotesqueness here as there is to argue that in the dramas it works with a doubled potency through both visual and auditory senses. Rather it will suffice, for now anyway, to be eclectic, to look at one play and a few sections of other works and thus arrive at some conclusions about what makes them grotesque and about the importance of the grotesque in Barlach's poetic world.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Kayser, *Das Groteske: Seine Gestaltung in Malerei und Dichtung* (Oldenburg/Hamburg, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Fechter, *Ernst Barlach* (Gütersloh, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Wilhelm Michel, *Das Teufelsische und das Groteske in der Kunst* (München, 1919), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ernst Barlach, *Aus seinen Briefen*, ed. Friedrich Dross (München, 1947), p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Barlach, *Leben und Werk in seinen Briefen*, ed. Friedrich Dross (München, 1952), p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> In his final chapter Kayser contents himself with an attempt at a "Wesensbestimmung" or phenomenological definition of the term *grotesque*, with the help

Of all Barlach's plays *Die echten Sedemunds* (1920)<sup>7</sup> is most like traditional comedy. It has many of the archaic ritualistic traits of Attic comedy described by F. M. Cornford.<sup>8</sup> It is full of personal invective and references to the human digestive and reproductive systems. It also has near the conclusion something like a marriage procession (*Kômos*) as well as a battle between a new and an old king (Sedemunds junior and senior) and a near miraculous rejuvenation of the latter. The play ends with the prospect of a marriage between Sedemund senior and a secondary female figure. Besides this, there are the comical, or farcical, results of the false rumor that a lion has escaped from the menagerie; respected riflemen at the "Schützenfest" are allowed to boast of their bravery and then later are helpless to hide their cowardice when they think the lion nearby.

There is comedy, too, in the language: Uncle Waldemar's speech defect, which makes his pretentious way of speaking even more ridiculous; dialect; and the murdering of the German language by foreigners (for example, the name of the lion is changed from Cäsar to Schesar and finally through misunderstanding to Scheisser).<sup>9</sup> In general, what Barlach makes laughable is the weakness of the flesh; the play shows persons embarrassed by their instinct of fear or, in Bergson's words, "the soul *tantalised* by the needs of the body."<sup>10</sup>

The color and confusion of the "Schützenfest" and the large number of equally colorful characters give the play that fullness and concreteness which comic presentation needs to fill the soul with sensuousness and, to quote further from Jean Paul,<sup>11</sup> "mit jenem

of a few characteristic motifs, and comes to the conclusion that it involves a playing with the absurd and is itself the attempt "das Dämonische in der Welt zu bannen und zu beschwören" (p. 202). Beyond this, one can say that good grotesque literature appears in times of transition, is morally serious and even mystical. It seeks to delight and instruct by means of horror, disgust, the diabolic, estrangement, and the incongruity which appears in the contradiction between new conditions or content and old forms. In modern literature a serious concern with the body and the biological underlies the grotesque mode and emerges in the shape of fanatic purity and/or obsession with filth and decay. The latter definition relies in part on Kayser and the following discussions of the term: Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History* (New York, 1937), pp. 49 ff. and 73 ff.; and William Van O'Connor, "The Grotesque in Modern American Fiction," *College English*, XX (1959), 342-46.

<sup>7</sup> A drama of unmasking and the conflict between generations. During a "Schützenfest" in a small town someone spreads a rumor that the lion—actually dead—has escaped. In the resulting terror and confusion the masks of false respectability worn by the first citizens begin to fall. Young Sedemund, whose father wants to send him to an insane asylum, confronts his father and forces him to confess publicly that he has in effect caused his mother's suicide by tricking her into a false confession of infidelity. The elder Sedemund later shows that he had good reasons for doing this to his self-righteous wife and in the course of the action proves to be more of a man than his son, who finally goes—by now a sobered reformer—voluntarily to the asylum. He does this so that the distressing disclosures can be blamed on his insanity and everything can return to normal.

<sup>8</sup> F. M. Cornford, *Origin of Attic Comedy* (London, 1914), pp. 8, 57, 84 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Barlach, *Die Dramen* (München, 1956), p. 201.

<sup>10</sup> Henri Bergson, "Laughter," *Comedy*, Doubleday Anchor Books A 87 (Garden City, N. Y., 1956), p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, Erste Abtheilung, § 35.

Dithyrambus sie entflammen, welcher die im Hohlspiegel eckig und lang auseinandergehende Sinnenwelt gegen die Idee aufrichtet und sie ihr entgegenhält." But there is something more unsettling in Barlach's concern with body and senses than simply the distortion of Jean Paul's concave mirror. And there is more to the comedy in *Die echten Sedemunds* than our appreciation of what Bergson calls a person embarrassed by his body.

The play begins not with the carnival atmosphere of the "Schützenfest," but rather with the somber meeting of two apprentices. One carries a funeral wreath; the other carries a child's coffin, but does not know where to deliver it. We are told immediately that hard by the new "Schützenhaus" lies the old graveyard and that some unspecified person is to be buried this day. Then, too, there are the two undertakers, Gierhahn and Ehrbahn, as well as pallbearers and a hearse driver who suddenly cuts the ears off his horses. These figures and situations, while potentially comic, have also a morbid aspect of equal force.

Nor are all the scenes laid in the "Schützengarten." The crucial one (V. Bild), where young Sedemund accuses his father of killing his mother, takes place before the ancestral tomb in the old churchyard. It begins with a bit of farce, when Gierhahn and Ehrbahn think they have the lion cornered, but ends on a morbid note so that a spectator wonders: "Ich weiß nicht, war es lustig oder traurig" (*Die Dramen*, p. 238). There is the same comic-uncanny ambiguity about the Kômos-like procession from the church to the cemetery. It begins "halb als Karnevalzug, halb als Leichenparade" (p. 248). The marchers are "Höllenbraten" and "Höllenbrüder" (p. 250), and they are led by a hurdy-gurdy man. Finally, the play closes with a happy couple dancing "gerade über die Gräber hin, mitten zwischen dem Grauen durch" (p. 265).

This, then, is one thing Barlach adds to the "humoristische Sinnlichkeit" suggested by Jean Paul: he keeps his audience aware of the dark side of sensuality, of death and decay. His characters are not simply embarrassed by the needs of their bodies; they are also uncomfortably conscious of the corrupt nature of the flesh. To judge by their figures of speech, they are obsessed by the stomach in particular. One maintains that all life is "ein Freßprozeß, ein Verwandlungs- und Verdauungswunder" (p. 222). And when he sees the mangy pelt of the lion people had feared would eat them, Sedemund senior comes to the conclusion that "Fressen und gefressen werden scheint auf gewisse Art dasselbe zu sein" (p. 251). Even the old man's rejuvenation is described as a digestive process: "der Löwe beißt dich. Der gute Löwe verwandelt dich als Fraß in sich" (p. 245).

The process, however, is not always so smooth. The diet of lion with its moral implications gives some people indigestion, and, according to old Sedemund, even Christ would be unable to stomach knowledge of Sedemund family affairs. "Er wird sich brechen über uns

und sich beschmutzen" (p. 245), he says, pointing to a statue of the Savior. Actually only Sedemund senior and the supposedly insane Grude enjoy this consumption and transformation, and not all the eating at the "Schützenfest" is so cosmic or metaphysical. The second and third scenes take place in the garden where many people are dining and drinking. Here, for instance, the miserable tailor Mankmoos satisfies his hunger with "Eierrühr" while his child goes hungry.

Barlach seems to find the bar or restaurant a convenient background for comic-grotesque scenes in many of his other works as well. *Der arme Vetter* (1918)<sup>12</sup> has one where, to be sure, no lion is lurking in a graveyard nearby. Instead, a dense fog has closed in around the inn at Lüttenbargen, and a young suicide, not yet dead, is the center of attention and ridicule. The "Wirtsstube" is full of people waiting for the boat to leave, and the stage directions call for "tobendes Verlangen . . . nach Speise und Trank" (p. 143). The master of ceremonies is grotesquely costumed as Frau Venus and surrounded by his court. His wit is predominantly scatological, but it ranges over the whole anatomy. He defends it and his drunkenness with the words: "Mein Humor ist kein Miesekätzchen . . . ich muß etwas Feuchtes in der Nase haben" (p. 149).

A member of the audience accommodates by blowing his nose and offering the handkerchief then to Frau Venus saying, "Wollen Sie auch mal?" (p. 149). He then cannot understand everyone's disgust: "Mir rätselhaft—ist doch einerlei Humor." He is wrong about this, for his is only one of the several kinds of humor here which might well be distinguished by the varying admixtures of disgust. Disgust is the most important word in this scene, disgust aroused by the wet handkerchief, by the grotesque dummy called "der schöne Emil," and in general by the flesh and its appetites. The dummy and, in fact, everything that goes on here is part of what Frau Venus calls an "Ekelkur" (p. 147), and it is disgust with the flesh and this world that has driven young Iver to suicide.

Cannibalism, too, can be a cure. Iver looks at the hungry crowd and says: "dabei komme ich mir vor wie unter Kannibalen, sehen Sie nur, wie er mich mit den Augen anbeißt, sie alle fressen ein Stück von mir, saufen mein Blut—vielleicht bin ich ihnen doch ein Tropfen gutes Gift" (p. 152). Cannibalism would seem the grotesque motif without parallel. Barlach often presents scenes of gluttony to revolt the viewer, but his most immediately affecting passages are those that deal with the eating of human flesh. To be sure, the eating

<sup>12</sup> This dream revolves around the figure of Hans Iver, who on a Sunday outing has shot himself out of despair and disgust with this world and his own "Selbstsein." The real action, however, takes place in the souls of two other individuals, Siebenmark and Fräulein Isenbarn. Through Iver they arrive at a clear understanding of themselves and the fact that their marriage would be impossible; it would be a surrender to the godless, purely sensual world represented by the demonic festivities at the inn where the crowd and the many characters gather.

of the symbolic horse in *Der tote Tag* and the references to cannibalism on a cosmic plane in *Der arme Vetter* and *Sedemunds* ("fressen und gefressen werden") are little more than suggestive. Yet it is quite real in *Der Findling*, where the bloody remains are displayed on the stage. In all cases it is a reminder of bestiality in men and arouses a total moral and instinctive revulsion. It excites what Michel, in his definition of disgust, calls "der panische Schrecken des . . . Leibes, eine Empfindung, die schon an und für sich eine Erniedrigung des Geistes bedeutet" (*Das Teuflische*, p. 67).

Another and even better example of the tavern scene and this kind of disgust, practically unrelieved, is found in the first chapter of the novel fragment *Seespeck*.<sup>13</sup> Here our laughter, if any, is compulsive and uncomfortable, as when one laughs at deformity or insanity. The episode has sufficient comic ingredients, but in part because of the point of view the finished product has almost no humor; it evokes disgust and terror. The fat, slovenly baker (another *Frau Venus*) who commands our attention has an evil quality about him, for this obscene mountain of flesh is not in the least embarrassed by the needs of his body. In fact, although he has long since satisfied his appetite, he continues to consume beer and cookies soaked in the same, befouling his front with the wet crumbs from his slobbering mouth. In the subterranean atmosphere of the ship's bar his audience grows, and he drinks and dunks with renewed delight as if saying: "Wenn ihr nur wüßtet, was für ein Ekel ich bin" (p. 17).

The baker is the incarnation of disgust. To make him even more oppressive, he is unpredictable and always on the attack. His most telling weapons are self-degradation and a total lack of shame. His actions reveal an extreme distortion and negation of human dignity, "Offenbarungen der Verblödung und der Selbstzerstückelung, der Verunehrung und Ableugnung alles Heiligen und überhaupt des menschlich Würdigen, Graden, Ganzen. Und das Schlimme schien, daß . . . die Entwürdigung mit Prahlerei gesalzen wurde" (p. 15). Yet, for all the bragging, the baker's gestures are sometimes like those of a condemned man, telling in pantomime of all his pain and guilt.

But the baker is not the only one condemned. He has selected a victim, the blank-faced Hemis,<sup>14</sup> a figure as grotesque as the baker but for quite different reasons. Hemis' behavior is cool and his face as rigid as a mask except for the eyes which are mobile and seem to absorb everything. At first he has nothing but scorn for his opponent; but his insatiable eyes undo him, and he becomes helpless, hypnotized by what revolts him. The baker seizes his advantage and degrades him, as *Frau Venus* did Iver, before the others, who occasionally find the spectacle repugnant. In his weakness and abject terror Hemis seems to the onlooker *Seespeck* the personification of

<sup>13</sup> Ernst Barlach, *Seespeck* (Berlin, 1948).

<sup>14</sup> The name is read Hannis in *Die Prosa*, I (München, 1958).

"Lebensangst,"<sup>15</sup> a man of fifty years who has avoided all strong emotional experience. With his sensitivity and anxiety he is not only the perfect victim, but also the direct opposite of the baker.

Seespeck, too, is imprisoned here in the cabin by his own disgusted fascination; he has stayed on against his better judgment. Finally, he tries to rescue poor Hemis, but he finds himself suddenly face to face with the monster. On being subjected to the same degrading treatment, he makes a surprise attack and kicks the baker in the belly, "daß er dem fetten Ungetüm sein Leibliches schmerzlich zu Gefühl brachte" (p. 22). This unreasoned act corresponds to what Barlach tries to accomplish here and elsewhere, namely, to make the reader or spectator painfully aware of his corporeal nature.

Like the kick, most of the action in the episode is sudden and unexpected, and the effect is unsettling. The entire episode is seen through Seespeck's eyes, and as he becomes enthralled by the disgusting spectacle, so does the reader. To make matters worse, his vision is disturbed by a hangover, so that even before he meets the baker the process of alienation and disruption has begun. His usual condition is so perverted "daß es ihm zu Mute war, als stände er ohne Halt auf einer hohen Leiter oder als faßte ihn . . . ein Schwindel, weil er in einen Spiegel schaute, in dem sich alles bewegte, was sonst ruhig lag und stand" (p. 9).

Jean Paul's concave mirror reflected but a mild caricature of the world of the senses. Its grotesque counterpart, Seespeck's mirror, reflects a world in dissolution and affects him with dizziness and nausea, which are aggravated by the ship's rocking and by the baker, to the point of extreme disgust, "der panische Schrecken des . . . Leibes" (Michel). Also because of his own excesses of the night before, Seespeck suffers, like Hemis, under a hypersensitivity, so that things become magnified far out of proportion. The awareness that his tie keeps slipping down distresses him painfully; when the baker sticks out his tongue and Hemis responds with a stare, we have not a childish situation but rather a deadly serious duel.

All this makes the effect of the scene grotesque rather than comic, for with a change in perspective the baker might well have been a clown rather than a monster. Comedy, says Bergson repeatedly, must not arouse our feelings; but in the first chapter of *Seespeck*, as elsewhere in Barlach, the aim is precisely to arouse the reader's feelings. The crowds in Barlach's barrooms may be able to laugh in detachment at the spectacle of the baker or *Frau Venus*, but the reader is made to feel discomfort. To excite this feeling Barlach lets loose in long periods a flood of words like *Scheußlichkeit*, *Kot*, *Ersticken*, *erwürgen*, *stinkende Blasen aus dem Sumpf*, *boshaft*, *unheimlich*, and so forth, until the episode comes to an arbitrary end with the boat's docking. Yet even with the tension eased, the

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Kayser: "Es geht beim Grotesken nicht um Todesfurcht, sondern um Lebensangst" (p. 199).

narrator adds another image of distortion to the great accumulation: as the baker walks off, "sein Schatten äffte es ihm nach und übertrieb alles in die Breite und Dicke" (p. 29). This is, however, only a weak reverberation of what has gone before. In spewing forth his disgust in hyperboles piled one on another with little obvious sense of proportion, it seems as if Barlach has exhausted the powers of exaggeration in himself and the language.

Barlach employs language and sound for grotesque purposes just as he does other features of style. In later works he uses words in a more artful way than he does in *Seespeck*,<sup>16</sup> thus achieving what is really a more direct effect on the mind and senses. Certain phrases, words, and sounds are stressed, repeated, and piled up, like the impressions of the baker, to give the language a cumulative, oppressive force. This is not Bergson's comic, Jack-in-the-box kind of repetition where words are repressed and repeatedly spring up anew (*Comedy*, p. 107). It is rather an insistent, pounding repetition. Like the hard stress in the frequent alliterative passages of his plays, it disturbs rather than delights with its rude forcing of language and syntax. The constant accentuation of little words like *Bauch* and *Fraß* seems at first to give them real substance. But in the end they suffer the same semantic exhaustion as do repeated abstractions like *Würde* and *Gerechtigkeit*.

Thus the grotesque extremes of sensuality (the baker) and cool abstraction (Hemis) show up again here. The recurrent stress on the sensuous element, or meat, of certain words makes them finally sound absurd, as when the "Chor der Rache" in *Der arme Vetter* picks up the phrase "Geh du—ich nicht," and changes it to a string of nonsense syllables by singing to the tune of "Krambambuli": "Geduichnicht—gedaichnicht—gedaichnicht—gedu—geda—gëda—ich nicht" (*Die Dramen*, p. 147). On the other hand, repetition of abstract words with varying, often contradictory connotations renders them equally meaningless.

But this is not all. Barlach's works are not just nightmarish, cold grotesques, nor do they show the same cynicism about language as do the productions of today's French theater of alienation exemplified by Eugene Ionesco. They have a religious warmth and make a paradoxical statement of faith. Granting that words are worthless for knowing in the ordinary sense, Barlach thinks that they nevertheless have an unlimited potential and that to use them properly is something like an act of reverence. He writes in a letter to Pastor Zimermann (1932):

Sehen Sie, man will "wissen" und verlangt nach dem Wort, aber das Wort ist untauglich, bestenfalls eine Krücke für die, denen das Humpeln geügt. Und dennoch ist im Wort etwas, was direkt ins Innerste dringt, wo es aus dem Lautersten, der absoluten Wahrheit kommt. . . . Das Nichts am Wortmäßigen

<sup>16</sup> Barlach stopped work on *Seespeck* in 1916.

mag wohl noch ans Absolute grenzen—Zahl, Ton, reine Form sind Heger der Geheimnisse. . . . (*Leben und Werk in seinen Briefen*, p. 178)

Similarly Barlach's works do more than show us the grotesque extremes of sensuality and "Lebensangst." Characters at the extreme ends of the scale—the baker and Hemis, the fat Zebid and Noah (*Sündflut*), Otto Prunkhorst and Grete Grüntal (*Der blaue Boll*)—are caught by their obsessions in this lower phase of existence which Barlach calls a "schlechtgelüfteter Engpaß" (*Aus seinen Briefen*, p. 64). But they usually are foils for thoughtful sensualists like Seespeck, Calan (*Sündflut*), and Boll, who are ready to risk transformation ("Werden") and elevation out of this phase. Because they are aware of the grotesque dissonances in themselves and this world and because they do not run away, they are transformed. They have appetites but are not gluttonous, nor are they afraid of being eaten. Calan's vision of divine being comes only after he has stayed behind the Ark and vermin have gnawed away his flesh and eyes. These central figures are strong and have a sense of humor. Their vision has distance. *Der Findling* is the least appealing of all Barlach's plays because, with the exception of the final pages, the disgust and horror are unrelieved, the diction and action chaotic, and there is no strong central figure. The disgust is so overpowering that the "Ekelkur" and epiphany at the end seem quite arbitrary.

In prose and drama Barlach is, therefore, working to the end Paul Fechter describes in respect to his graphic and plastic work:

sein immer wiederkehrendes Ringen nämlich mit dem Geist der Schwere, sein Versuch ihn so weit zu besiegen, daß es gelingt, den Menschen wenigstens im Bilde von der Erde zu lösen, ihn in den Zustand des Schwebens, des Aufsteigens aus dem Bereich des Chthonischen in die reineren Lüfte zu bringen. (*Ernst Barlach*, pp. 50-51)

And he accomplishes this through the grotesque which is, in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's words, "ein sinnliches Paradox, die Gestalt nämlich einer Ungestalt, das Gesicht einer gesichtslosen Welt."<sup>17</sup> Baudelaire points to the same paradox when he says that, whereas laughter caused by comedy is the expression of man's superiority over man, laughter caused by the grotesque is the expression of the idea of man's superiority over nature.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Theaterprobleme* (Zürich, 1955), p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Baudelaire, "On the Essence of Laughter," *Mirror of Art: Critical Studies*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne, Doubleday Anchor Books A 84 (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), p. 143.

## ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF GAUTIER D'ARRAS

By WILLIAM C. CALIN

One of the most interesting recent developments in Old French scholarship is the renewed concern with the problem of medieval literary chronology. The generally accepted theories on the works of Gautier d'Arras have suffered the same fate as those on Chrétien de Troyes: neither has been exempt from searching reappraisal and modification. However, since nothing has been proved conclusively, it is possible to reopen the entire question with a view toward examining this criticism and testing its validity.

Gautier d'Arras is known to us as the author of two twelfth-century courtly romances, *Eracle*<sup>1</sup> and *Ille et Galeron*.<sup>2</sup> The only direct evidence for a dating of the two works is contained in dedicatory remarks at the beginning and end of each poem, allusions to famous contemporaries whose friendship Gautier enjoyed and who aided him in the process of his work. In the *Eracle* we read:

50      Or vueil me bouche recincier :  
Del plus vaillant dirai le some  
Qui soit d'Irlande jusqu'a Rome,  
Del bon conte Tiebaut de Blois,  
Del preu, del large, del courtois.

6548     "Li quens Tiebaut, ou riens ne faut,  
Li fiz al bon conte Tiebaut,  
Me fist ceste uevre rimoier ;  
Par lui le fis, nel quier noier,  
Et par le contesse autressi,  
Marie, fille Loëi.  
Faite m'en a mainte assaillie  
Cil qui a Hainau en baillie  
Que je traississe l'uevre a fin. . . .  
6584     Quens Bauduins, a vous l'otroi. . . ."

The following citations are from *Ille et Galeron*:

1      Aie Dex, Sains Esperis !  
Qu'a la mellor emperreis  
Qui onques fust, si con jo pens  
Otroi mon service et mon sens.

<sup>1</sup> *Eracles, deutsches und französisches Gedicht des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (jenes von Otte, dieses von Gautier d'Arras), zum ersten Mal hrsg. von H. Massmann (Leipzig, 1842); *Œuvres de Gautier d'Arras: Eracle*, p. p. E. Löseth (Paris, 1890). We shall cite passages from the Löseth edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Œuvres de Gautier d'Arras: Ille et Galeron*, p. p. E. Löseth (Paris, 1890); *Ille et Galeron von Walter von Arras*, hrsg. W. Foerster (Halle, 1891); *Ille et Galeron par Gautier d'Arras*, p. p. Frederick A. G. Cowper (SATF; Paris, 1956). We shall cite passages from the Cowper edition, which is based upon the more recently discovered MS W (Wollaton Hall) but which also contains the variants of the standard MS P (Bibl. Nat. fonds français 375).

Les plusors fausent en la fin;  
Mais la u Dex mist tant de fin  
Come en l'emperreis de Rome  
Doivent entendre et angele et home  
Et proier Deu et jor et nuit  
Qu'ele n'ait rien qui li anuit.  
Molt est ma dame pros et sage  
Et cho li vient de bon corage:  
Car de Viane furent net  
De Rome tolit li plus senet,  
Li plus gentil, li plus halt home. . . .  
Rome le vit ja coroner,  
Qui nos en puet conseil doner.

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807

Cil Dex vers cui nus ne se cuevre,  
Doinst bien la bone Beatris,  
Qui est de Rome empereris,  
—Cele est la melder qui soit nee,  
Envie se rest molt penee,—  
Et gart le bon conte Tiebaut;  
Cist dui me sont et liet et baut. . . .  
Por qant por li le commençai  
Et por le conte le finai<sup>3</sup>

5828

The generally accepted, "classical" theory of Gautier's chronology, based on these passages, was formulated in 1891 by the German scholar and critic Wendelin Foerster.<sup>4</sup> Foerster demonstrates conclusively that the empress alluded to in the prologue to *Ille et Galeron* is Beatrice of Burgundy, second wife of Frederick Barbarossa, married to him in 1156 and crowned with him at Rome on August 1, 1167 (d. 1184); that the "bon conte Tiebaut de Blois" mentioned in both poems must then refer to Count Thibaut V of Blois (1152-1191), son of Thibaut IV (1125-1152); that "Marie, fille Loëi" refers to Marie, daughter of Louis VII and Eleanore of Aquitaine, celebrated patroness of Chrétien de Troyes, Countess of Champagne from 1164, when she married Henri I, to 1189, the date of her death; and that the Baudouin "who has Hainaut in his possession" must be either Baudouin IV (1120-1171) or his son Baudouin V (1171-1195).

Thus it can be assumed with reasonable certainty that *Eracle* was written at some time between 1164 (marriage of Marie) and 1191 (death of Thibaut) and that *Ille* was written between 1167 (coronation of Beatrice) and 1184 (date of her death). In an effort to determine Gautier's chronology with greater precision, however, Foerster suggests that the phrase "Rome le vit ja coroner" indicates that *Ille* was composed shortly after the coronation:

Daraus folgt, dass . . . wir nunmehr den Ille sicher bald nach der am 1. August 1167 stattgehabten römischen Krönung ansetzen müssen. . . . [Note] Näher lässt sich die Zeit nicht bestimmen, da jede andere bestimmtere Handhabung

<sup>3</sup> This last citation (lines 5807 ff.) is to be found only in MS W and was thus unknown to the earlier commentators.

<sup>4</sup> Foerster, *Ille et Galeron*, pp. v-xix. It is unnecessary to review here the now obsolete interpretations of his predecessors: Roquefort, P. Paris, Jubinal, Massman, Littré, G. Paris. Cf. Foerster, pp. vii-xix; Cowper, pp. xxxix-xl.

fehlt. Selbstverständlich kann, wenn der Prolog des Gedichts was ebenso möglich, erst nach Beendigung des Gedichtes verfasst worden ist, der *Ille* gerade zu der Zeit der Krönung schon vollendet gewesen sein.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, he attempts to demonstrate the chronological precedence of *Eracle* by the following points: (1) a reference in *Eracle* to a succeeding work, which, presumably, must be *Ille*,<sup>6</sup> (2) an allusion in *Ille* to an event (the horse-race) recounted in *Eracle*,<sup>7</sup> (3) Gautier would never have presumed to dedicate *Ille*, if it had been his first work, to the Empress of Germany; and (4) a general study of the style, which indicates the priority of *Eracle*.<sup>8</sup>

With *Ille* written shortly after 1167 and presumably before 1171 and with *Eracle* written before *Ille*, Foerster assumes that Baudouin IV was the count referred to in the epilogue to *Eracle* (lines 6554-93); Baudouin V, born in 1151, would be far too young for such a dedication. In any case, an additional allusion indicates that the father rather than the son was meant: in speaking of the friendship he bears to the count, Gautier writes, "En dis et set anz et demi / Ne trueve om pas un bon ami . . .," intimating, according to Foerster, that he had known Baudouin for a long time. Thus Foerster arrives at the conclusion that *Eracle* was begun after the marriage of Marie and terminated before *Ille* (1164-1167), and that *Ille* was begun shortly after the coronation of Beatrice and probably completed not too long thereafter (1167-1171).

Foerster's sophisticated and ingenious theorizing, based upon the intelligent weighing of probabilities rather than upon certain proofs, was accepted immediately by the majority of scholars<sup>9</sup> and is enshrined today in the manuals. A final confirmation of his thesis seemed to come to light in 1911 with the discovery of the Wollaton

<sup>5</sup> Foerster, p. xi.

<sup>6</sup> *Eracle*: Ainsi que passent dui an ou troi  
Metrai ailleurs, espoir, m'entente.  
(lines 6585-86)

<sup>7</sup> *Ille*: Por cho ne doit nus avillier  
Polain velut de noviel net,  
Ne vallet petit, depanet.  
(lines 120-22)

<sup>8</sup> Foerster, p. xviii: "nämlich der aus dem Studium seiner Sprache, bes. des Reims, sich ergebende Schluss, dass Heraklius das frühere, der *Ille* das spätere Gedicht sein muss. . . ." Unfortunately, this stylistic analysis never materialized.

<sup>9</sup> G. Paris, *Romania*, XXI (1892), 277-78; Warnke, *Die Fabeln der Marie de France* (Halle, 1898), pp. cxvi-cxvii; Suchier, *Geschichte der französischen Literatur* (Leipzig-Wien, 1900), pp. 135-36; Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, I (Paris, 1905), 389; Wilmotte, *L'Evolution du roman français aux environs de 1150* (Paris, 1905), p. 15; Warren, "Some Features of Style in Early French Narrative Poetry," *Modern Philology*, III (1905-6), 198-99, 521-22, 525-26, and IV (1907), 668-69; Foulet, "Marie de France et la légende de Tristan," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, XXXII (1908), 180-83; Stevenson, *Der Einfluss des Gautier d'Arras auf die altfranzösische Kunstepik, insbesondere auf den Abenteuerroman* (diss. Göttingen, 1910), pp. 6-8; Voretzsch, *Einführung in das Studium der altfranzösischen Literatur*, 3rd ed. (Halle, 1925), pp. 266-68, 354-55; Hoepfner, "Le roman d'*Ille* et Galeron et le lai d'*Eliduc*," *Studies Presented to M. K. Pope* (1939), pp. 143-44; Feuchère, *Les Châtelains d'Arras* (Arras, 1948), p. 13; Zumthor, *Histoire littéraire de la France médié-*

Hall Manuscript of *Ille et Galeron*<sup>10</sup> (MS W), whose epilogue completes and elucidates an obscure phrase in the MS P:

5803     Ne en l'estorie plus n'en ot,  
 Ne plus n'en a, ne plus n'i mist  
 Galters d'Arras qui s'entremist  
 D'Eracle, ains qu'il fesist cest uevre.

This passage seems to prove conclusively Foerster's assertion of the posteriority of *Ille*, and at the same time confirms his entire system.

The first serious criticism of Foerster's thesis was proffered by E. S. Sheldon in 1919.<sup>11</sup> Sheldon admits the evidence of MS W that *Eracle* was written before *Ille*, thus coinciding with the views of Foerster; but he cannot agree that *Ille* was necessarily written directly after Beatrice's coronation in 1167. First, he cites a review by Tobler,<sup>12</sup> claiming that Foerster fails to prove his point and that *Ille* could have been written any time between 1167 and 1185, the date of the Empress' death. The American critic reaches approximately the same conclusion himself:

The coronation of Beatrice was a sufficiently important event in her life to justify a poet in making much of it, even if it was not a very recent occurrence when he wrote. And this is still true even after the treaty of Venice in the autumn of 1177, when Frederick recognized Alexander as the rightful pope and ceased to support the claim of the rival pope.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, writes Sheldon, there are serious reasons to doubt such a poetic composition in the first few years after 1167: Barbarossa was forced to flee Italy directly after the coronation and was not able to return until 1174—it is not likely that the Empress would have been in a receptive mood for a courtly romance during this period of strife and uncertainty. Assuming, then, that Gautier did not write his poem during Beatrice's first stay in Italy, during her flight, or during the hectic military preparations for a return, one is left with the probability that *Ille* was written during Beatrice's second trip to Italy (1174-1178) or perhaps after her return. In this case, the Empress' prolonged stay would explain why Gautier considered changing patrons at the end of his poem. Presumably, then, *Eracle* was written before *Ille*, the former being set down after 1164 and the latter before 1180, a fairly long composition envisaged for both works.

The problem of Gautier's chronology was then taken up in a series of articles by F. A. G. Cowper, the scholar who later edited the text of the Wollaton Hall manuscript.<sup>14</sup> Cowper believes Sheldon to be

vale (Paris, 1954), pp. 194-95; Levy, *Chronologie approximative de la littérature française du moyen âge* (Tübingen, 1957), p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> W. H. Stevenson, *Report of the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton Preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire* (London, 1911), pp. 221-35.

<sup>11</sup> E. S. Sheldon, "On the Date of *Ille et Galeron*," *Modern Philology*, XVII (1919-20), 383-92.

<sup>12</sup> Adolf Tobler, "Besprechung des *Ille et Galeron*, herausgegeben von Förster," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, XCI (1893), 103-18.

<sup>13</sup> Sheldon, p. 385.

right in that a fairly long period of time elapsed in the composition of *Ille* and that a loss of patronage was involved, but he feels that there is no solid evidence for assigning the specific years 1174-1178 to *Ille*'s composition; on the contrary, the very flight from Italy after the coronation would be a natural cause for the introduction of a new patron, Thibaut V of Blois. This line of reasoning leads Cowper to the core of his investigation, a study of Gautier's patrons and the implications that each change of patronage would have upon the chronology of his work:

If we accepted the theory that *Eracle* was completed before *Ille*, we should be obliged to take with it not only the conclusion that Gautier broke off with Thibaut and Marie, and finished *Eracle* for Baudouin, but also that he thereupon began a work for Beatrice, deserted her, and returned to his former patron Thibaut. Is this probable? I am convinced that *Ille* must have been completed during the period when Gautier was working for the Champagne-Blois group and before he attached himself to Baudouin, consequently that *Ille*, while begun later than *Eracle*, was completed before it.<sup>15</sup>

The passage in *Ille* cited above ("Galters d'Arras qui s'entremist / D'Eracle, ains qu'il fesist cest uevre," lines 5805-6) would seem to belie Cowper's thesis, but he answers that "s'entremestre," according to Godefroy, means only "to occupy oneself with" and that, therefore, "the only thing proved by these lines is that Gautier began *Eracle* first."<sup>16</sup> If this be so, then the *Eracle*, begun first, must have been dropped for the *Ille* commanded by the Empress of Germany; at a certain moment Gautier would have abandoned his royal patroness and reattached himself to the Champagne-Blois group, for whom he would have finished the *Ille* and most of the *Eracle*, before finally turning to Baudouin of Hainaut toward the end. This last patron could have been either Baudouin IV or Baudouin V: if the former, we arrive at a general chronology similar to Foerster's, i.e., both poems composed between 1164 and 1171, though in a slightly different order; if the latter, then we are reduced to the old vague dating suggested by Tobler: *Eracle* (1164-1191) and *Ille* (1167-1184).

Cowper tends to side with the latter hypothesis because (1) Baudouin V was known as a patron of letters and friend of the Champagne circle, and (2) a lengthy period of composition and transmission seems inherent in the elaboration of these two works. This would mean that *Eracle* was begun at an early date, then laid aside for *Ille*, which was partly composed at the same time as or directly after Beatrice's coronation, perhaps in Italy itself<sup>17</sup>—and both works were then completed long afterward.

In 1935 Foerster was attacked from a different quarter by Theodor

<sup>14</sup> Frederick A. G. Cowper, "The New Manuscript of *Ille et Galeron*," *Modern Philology*, XVIII (1920-21), 601-8; "The Sources of *Ille et Galeron*," *Modern Philology*, XX (1922-23), 35-44.

<sup>15</sup> Cowper, "New Manuscript," p. 607.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>17</sup> Cowper, "Sources," p. 44.

Heinermann of Münster.<sup>18</sup> Heinermann repeats the thesis of Tobler and Sheldon, that the prologue to *Ille et Galeron* could have been written any time after 1167 and not as a direct result of the coronation. This granted, *Eracle* was not necessarily written before 1167 and therefore could have been completed due to the urging of either Baudouin IV or his son Baudouin V. According to Heinermann, Baudouin V is more plausible as a patron because (1) the allusion in the "En dis et set anz et demi / Ne trueve om pas un bon ami . . .," upon which Foerster relies as a proof for Baudouin IV (cf. above, p. 183), is not to be taken literally but rather as a stylistic ornament typical of the age; and (2) in the period between 1168 and 1170 Baudouin IV was approaching seventy, whereas Baudouin V, a young man in his prime, was more likely to have been favorable to the pursuit of letters and the new courtly school. Thus *Eracle* would have been written after 1171, date of the accession of Baudouin V.

Heinermann's crowning argument, however, is a supposed analogy between the love story in *Eracle* and the real intrigues of Eleanor of Aquitaine: Massmann and Cowper had already suggested a parallel between Athanaïs' betrayal of the Emperor Lais with young Paridès and Eleanor's marriage with Henry II of England after her divorce from Louis VII;<sup>19</sup> Heinermann, however, denies this analogy and claims instead that the episode in the novel (unjust imprisonment of an innocent queen for supposed felonies, followed by her commission of these very felonies) is patterned after the queen's mistreatment by Henry, not Louis—i.e., Eleanor's celebrated captivity from 1173 to her death in 1189.

To explain the stylistic antiquity evident in certain parts of *Eracle*, Heinermann suggests that the poem is not an originally unified and coherent whole: rather, Gautier would have written a crusade epic about Heraclius in decasyllables just after the Second Crusade; later on, he would have been exposed to the influence of Chrétien de Troyes and the complicated love sophistry of Marie's court; and, finally, in endeavoring to compose a romance in the new style, he would have fused a love story, the Lais-Athanaïs-Paridès triangle, with his old and now antiquated epic:

Darin sollte allgemein der Gedanke des Kreuzzuges vorkommen, darin sollten die Erinnerungen an den zweiten Kreuzzug, an Ludwig und Alienor, Thibauts Schwiegereltern, verflochten werden, dabei aber sollte das Werk modern sein, sollte ein Roman sein mit einer regelrechten Liebesgeschichte, mit Wunderdingen und mit abenteurlichen Verwicklungen.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Theodor Heinermann, "Zur Zeitbestimmung der Werke Gautiers von Arras und zu seiner Stellung zu Chrétien von Troyes," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, LIX (1935), 237-45. Further elaborated in the thesis of his pupil Wilhelm Hüppé, *Der Sprachstil Gautiers von Arras* (diss. Münster, 1937).

<sup>19</sup> Massmann, *loc. cit.*; Cowper, "Sources," pp. 41-42.

<sup>20</sup> Heinermann, p. 245.

Ultimately, then, Heinermann posits an early version of the *Eracle* near 1150, followed by a courtly revision under the influence of Chrétien de Troyes after 1173—presumably, *Ille et Galeron* was written still later. In spite of obvious differences in method and approach, we are not too far from the views of F. A. G. Cowper.

Less than ten years ago, due to Cowper's indefatigable researches, a series of 111 documents from the court of Philip of Alsace concerning a certain "Gualterus de Atrebato" were brought to light—the similarity in time and place between the two Gautiers precludes the possibility of a mere coincidence in name.<sup>21</sup> Gualterus was a knight, the son of Wirenfroy d'Arras (Wirenfridus de Atrebato), who was a younger son of the family of châtelains of Arras—Gualterus himself twice acted as regent in that capacity without, however, ever having possessed the title.

He is first cited in charters of the years 1160 and 1161 as a witness in various legal transactions for Philip and as a property holder possessing fiefs from the Abbey of Saint-Vaast d'Arras. From 1161 to 1165 his name is not mentioned, so that one may believe him to have been out of the country. From 1165 to 1184 he assumed a steadily increasing position of importance in the affairs of his county—as judge and prévôt, he was awarded in 1177 the title "minister et officialis Philippi" and on several occasions acted as regent of Flanders in Philip's absence. He married Agnes, sister of Hellin de Wavrin, Seneschal of Flanders, had at least three sons, one of whom, Roger, was his chief heir, and, since his last notice appears in 1185, probably died shortly thereafter.

In fine, we may report the latest statement on the Gautier chronology, the introduction to Cowper's excellent edition of *Ille et Galeron* by the "Société des Anciens Textes Français" in 1956.<sup>22</sup> In general, it is a clear restatement of his earlier position: (1) *Ille* was composed in between the first and last parts of *Eracle*, thus explaining the patronage allusions and the phrase "Galters d'Arras qui s'entremist / D'Eracle, ains qu'il fesist cest uevre"; (2) Baudouin V was a more likely patron for Gautier than was his father, since he was younger, more cultivated, and more closely attached to Marie de Champagne, so that the *termini ad quos* for the *Eracle* and *Ille* are 1191 and 1184 respectively. The most likely period for the composition of Gautier's novels lies, therefore, in the general area from 1170 to 1185, thus roughly corresponding with that assigned to Chrétien de Troyes by the most recent critics:

Que la composition de nos deux romans doive être avancée jusqu'au dernier quart du siècle, cela n'a rien d'inraisemblable. Gautier occupait à la cour de Blois une situation comparable à celle de Chrétien de Troyes à la cour de Champagne; il est donc assez naturel que leur carrière, se soit déroulée dans le

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Cowper, "More Data on Gautier d'Arras," *PMLA*, LXIV (1949), 302-16; Pierre Feuchère, *Les Châtelains d'Arras* (Arras, 1948), pp. 12-17; Cowper, pp. x-xiv.

<sup>22</sup> Cowper, pp. xxxviii-xlv.

même temps. Celle de Chrétien se poursuit de 1170 à 1185 environ. Ce sont des dates que conviendraient aussi pour la redaction d'*Eracle* et d'*Ille et Galeron*.<sup>23</sup>

The critics of Wendelin Foerster (Messrs. Sheldon, Heinermann, and Cowper) are not content merely to assert that Foerster's position is unprovable, but they are also willing to suggest a new pattern of composition and chronology. In spite of their obvious differences, they would probably all agree that the period 1170-1185 is far more plausible for the composition of Gautier's novels than Foerster's suggestion of 1164-1171. Unless we admit to complete skepticism in the matter of medieval chronology, presumably either Foerster or Sheldon-Heinermann-Cowper is correct, and it is possible to choose between them. It is also possible to arrive at a totally new hypothesis, but, given the nature of the material, this too will probably be derived from one or another of the preceding theories. In the succeeding pages we shall attempt to weigh their probabilities one against the other and, using the latest information on Gautier's official career whenever possible,<sup>24</sup> arrive at a conclusion. With prudence we may elucidate the matter.

First of all, however, we must discover if there is any substantial evidence to believe, as do Heinermann and Cowper, that the *Eracle* is not a coherent, unified poem written from a single point of view and in a normal length of time by one poet, Gautier d'Arras. Then we must determine the chronological relationship between this *Eracle* and Gautier's other poem, *Ille et Galeron*. Against Heinermann's claim for disunity in the *Eracle*, we are able to cite the verses of the prologue directly following the invocation of Count Thibaut:

95      D'Eracle ci endroit comence,  
 Qui onques jour n'ot soing de tence.  
 Si l'acheta li seneschauz  
 Povre, fameleus et deschauz;  
 Et tout l'avor qu'en prist li mere  
 Dona pour l'ame sen chier pere.  
 Si conisoit bien li vassaus  
 Pieres et fenes et chevaus.  
 Assez vous dirai en romanx  
 Les *prouvinces* et les *comanz*  
 Que l'empereur fist de lui,  
 Et com il mescroisit celui;  
 Com en deus choses l'esprouva,  
 Et quant le grant bien i trouva,  
 Par lui se maria li sire.  
 Et si m'orez el romanx dire  
 A com grant tort il fu gabez,  
 Et com il fu puis adoubez;  
 Com il vint puis a tel honeur,

<sup>23</sup> Cowper, p. xlvi.

<sup>24</sup> We have no proof that Gualterus de Atrebato and Gautier d'Arras are one and the same person; and it would seem unusual that a prévôt to the Count of Flanders should neither mention his position in his works nor dedicate one of them to his lord. Yet we must accept Cowper's identification, at least as a working hypothesis, for want of a better.

Qu'om fist de lui empereur,  
 Et tint Costantinoble quite.  
 Et si vous iert li chose dite  
 Com il le sainte croiz conquist  
 Sour Cosdroë, que il ocist;  
 Com se gent fu reconfortee,  
 Et com li croiz en fu portee,  
 La ou om sueut a Deu tencier.  
 Huimais vueil m'uevre comencier.

From this passage and from an attentive study of the text one is forced to acknowledge the tight organization and unity of the poem: true, *Eracle* contains three disparate elements—a fairy-tale success story with Oriental motif, a courtly love intrigue, and a religious chronicle treated in the manner of a *chanson de geste*—but these are skillfully fused to form one story, the exemplary yet human life of Heraclius, boy prophet,<sup>25</sup> counselor to kings, and savior of the Holy Cross. Gautier is quite eclectic in his choice of themes, yet this eclecticism is one of the major charms of his work and quite essential to the presentation of the development of Heraclius' character.

*Eracle* is not an epic cycle, one in which the mature deeds of the hero are first narrated in one poem, then his youthful exploits ("enfances") in another by a different poet. Gautier d'Arras is the sole author, and although Heraclius' crusade may have been the starting point either for him or his patron, we must assume that the author began at the beginning like any other normal writer. The courtly love intrigue between Athanais and Paridès is neither mentioned in the prologue nor entirely to be expected by the reader, but it fits in quite coherently with the general plot. It is an ultimate test of Heraclius' powers and a final indication of the Emperor's mistrust and ingratitude, a failing which proves this time to be disastrous. Moreover, the love motif is no less apropos than in the *Thèbes* or the *Troie*, both of which resemble the *Eracle* in style as well as composition.

The author of the *Eracle* has eminently succeeded in the artistic delineation of his hero by placing him in three successive life-situations and by using three entirely different literary media to express these situations—the rise of Heraclius is exemplified by a corresponding rise in genre: from idyll to courtly romance to the epic. And this epic quality of the last part, contrasting so sharply with *Ille*'s courtly atmosphere, is the strongest argument we know for its chronological precedence.

A careful analysis of the style of Gautier's two poems<sup>26</sup> leads us to postulate not only that *Eracle* is a unified whole, but also that it differs markedly from *Ille et Galeron* and precedes it. It is interest-

<sup>25</sup> Note the topos "puer-senex." Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948), pp. 106-9.

<sup>26</sup> F. M. Warren, "Some Features of Style in Early French Narrative Poetry," *Modern Philology*, III (1905-1906), 179-209, 513-39, and IV (1906-1907), 655-75.

ing to note that whereas *Eracle* contains many transposed parallelisms (complete transposition of the following line, or repetition of the line with transposition of the word at the rime), only one example is to be found in *Ille*. Both poems contain examples of direct repetition of words, phrases, and lines, but in different forms:

In general it may be said that *Eracle* presents many instances of direct repetition and a considerable variety of parallelistic forms, but displays an inferior talent in expressing them.

Gautier's second poem of *Ille et Galeron*, which was composed under auspices quite different from the environment of *Eracle*, reveals a smaller number of parallelistic passages and less variety of form. Transposed parallelism disappears entirely.<sup>27</sup>

There is a "striking difference"<sup>28</sup> between the number of passages in the two poems in which occur couplets in monorime (*tirades lyriques*), while, concerning the presence of broken couplets and three-line sentences, F. M. Warren writes:

there is no appreciable variation throughout the whole romance [*Eracle*] in the treatment of the couplet. The proportion of broken couplets constantly remains at 18.5 per cent, and of three-line sentences at slightly over 31. If we compare these figures with those derived from a reading of Gautier's other romance, *Ille et Galeron* . . . we find the percentage of broken couplets is identical with the percentage of *Eracle*, while the ratio of three-line phrases falls to 20 per cent. It should also be stated that, while *Eracle* offers as many as forty instances of overflow verse, *Ille et Galeron* presents barely ten. Consequently, a considerable difference may be said to exist between the versification of the two poems.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, all of these stylistic differences are significant in that the features found in *Eracle* resemble those in earlier works, the *Thèbes*, *Enéas*, and *Troie*, while those unique to *Ille* are found also in *Chrétien de Troyes* and succeeding writers.

It would seem that an analysis of the structure, atmosphere, and style of *Eracle* indicates its unity and priority in regard to *Ille*. Nevertheless, Frederick Cowper claims that it is not impossible that *Ille* was written after *Eracle* was begun and before its second part was completed. We ask, however, whether, from the point of view of stylistic and aesthetic common sense, it be at all probable that *Ille*, which Cowper himself considers to be an "œuvre à tous égards moins soignée et moins cohérente"<sup>30</sup> than *Eracle*, could have been thus sandwiched in sometime during the composition of her tightly organized sister. Is it likely that Gautier would have abandoned writing one novel in favor of another for no solid reason, especially when during the Middle Ages, far more than today, a novelist had a particular, chosen public before whom he read his works, often during the period of composition? Is it probable that Gautier would have sought the favor of the Empress of Rome without having

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 522.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 660.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 668-69. This, in spite of Warren's unexplained assumption that the last part of *Eracle* was written several years after the first two, pp. 199, 668.

<sup>30</sup> Cowper, p. xlivi.

achieved literary acclaim in a previous work? And, given all this, is it plausible that he would cite *Eracle* at the end of *Ille* if he had not already brought it to a successful conclusion?

Moreover, we see no reason to accept Cowper's interpretation of "s'entremist": the word can well mean "begin, occupy oneself, assume," but, since it is a rime word, any serious theory which rests on a subtle definition of its meaning is open to question. It appears to us that any one reading the aforementioned passage (lines 5805-6) without a preconceived objection must come to the obvious conclusion that Gautier means simply that he has written *Ille et Galeron* after having completed *Eracle*—the very point of the preceding investigation.

But Cowper does have a preconceived objection—the question of the patrons.<sup>31</sup> However, if we accept his hypothesis—that Gautier would have begun *Eracle* for the "Blois-Champagne group," then have begun *Ille* for the Empress Beatrice, then have returned to Thibaut to complete *Ille* and continue *Eracle*, while, however, concluding the latter work at the command of Baudouin of Hainaut—we are still in a quandary. For this explanation is hardly more reasonable than Foerster's original system to which he objects; in each case the continuity of Gautier's reception at Thibaut's court is needlessly and inexplicably interrupted. And if we extend Cowper's method to its logical extreme, then we must arrive at the following highly unlikely order of composition: (1) *Ille* begun under Beatrice, (2) *Eracle* begun and *Ille* completed for Thibaut, and (3) *Eracle* completed for Baudouin.<sup>32</sup> This potpourri requires a dexterity at abandoning literature once begun and changing patrons once acquired that is quite beyond our comprehension.

In reality, however, the entire question appears somewhat irrelevant—we do not believe it absolutely implicit that each and every praise and mention of a notable personage implies a corresponding change in patronage. After all, Gautier was not a starving jongleur begging his daily bread like Rutebeuf or Colin Muset, nor even a reasonably successful court poet like Chrétien de Troyes or Jean Renart—he was a knight, judge, and administrator, trusted vassal of Philip of Flanders, possessing at least seventeen fiefs from the Abbey of Saint-Vaast alone; such a position precludes excessive dependence on the generosity of foreign princes.

From this point of view, the allusions to noble friends in *Eracle* and *Ille* quite naturally appear to be examples of a literary mode current throughout the Middle Ages since late antiquity—the invocation of powerful protectors and friends, whether they be real or imaginary.<sup>33</sup> Not that we should presume to imply that Gautier was not

<sup>31</sup> Cf. above, pp. 184-85.

<sup>32</sup> Proposed by Ph.-A. Becker, "Von der Erzähln neben und nach Chrestien de Troyes," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, LV (1935), 278-79.

<sup>33</sup> Curtius, pp. 91-97, 174-88.

well acquainted with the Countess of Champagne, the Counts of Blois and Hainaut, and the Empress of Germany, or that they did not encourage him in his work—quite the contrary; but we feel that any chronological deductions based on such supposed changes of patronage do not bear a sufficient weight of probability. It would seem more correct to assume that Gautier remained during the entire composition of his novels the trusted vassal of Philip of Flanders and close friend of the neighboring princes, whom he chose to compliment in his works.<sup>34</sup>

We feel that the foregoing analysis has supplied sufficient evidence for a general assumption that *Eracle* and *Ille* are simple, coherent, unified poems, and that the *Eracle* was composed first. Now it remains to specify the dates. The eternal question inevitably raises its head: does the epilogue to *Eracle* refer to Baudouin IV of Hainaut or to his son Baudouin V. If the former, as claimed by Foerster (Hypothesis I), then the chronological situation remains relatively unchanged, but with an important modification: assuming *Eracle* to have been written first in toto, we are not required to squeeze both poems in before 1171, as Cowper and, inexplicably, Foerster himself intimate. *Eracle* could have been written any time between 1164 and 1170 (approaching the death of Baudouin IV) and *Ille* directly thereafter—it is not in the least implausible that *Ille* should have been started three years after the coronation and also have taken four or five years for completion. The time-span 1164-1174 would also explain the supposed allusions in both poems to the author's laxity, caused no doubt either by personal temperament or press of official duties, and it would also explain a possible cooling of ardor toward the Empress in the epilogue to *Ille*, Beatrice having been away in Italy from 1174 to 1178.

On the other hand, if we choose Baudouin V to have been Gautier's patron (Hypothesis II), the situation becomes more complex. The general time-span of the two novels can be extended to include the entire period from 1164 to 1191. Of course, assuming once again that we are not incorrect in claiming *Eracle* to have been written in its entirety before *Ille*, the duration is reduced to a period of thirteen years—from Baudouin IV's death in 1171 to the death of Beatrice in 1184—or just the period finally envisaged by Cowper.

It is possible, however, to reduce the chronological limits even further: first of all, it seems highly unlikely that the dedicatory epilogue to *Eracle* was written in the early years of Baudouin V's reign; a boy of twenty does not receive such praise from a man fifteen years his senior:

<sup>34</sup> For an even more pronounced case of dedication not based on material dependence, cf. Rita Lejeune-Dehousse, *L'Œuvre de Jean Renart: Contribution à l'étude du genre romanesque au moyen âge* (Paris-Liège, 1935), pp. 74-82, 212-20. Cowper himself is forced to modify his views on the role of patronage. Cf. his review of Guyer's *Romance in the Making* in *Romanic Review*, XLVII (1956), 41.

6557      Jel sai si preudome et si fin  
 Que je l'aim plus que prince el monde,  
 Et se j'en ment, Deus me confonde;  
 Et se jou pour lui ne faisoie  
 Cou que pour autrui ne feroie,  
 Jugier pouoit très bien en lui  
 Que je ne l'aim pas plus qu'autrui.

6571      Trestouz mes pouoirs est petiz  
 A men signeur servir a gré.  
 Mout par montai en haut degré,  
 Et richement bien m'empointai  
 Le jour que premiere l'acointai.  
 Esleu l'ai en mon aumaire,  
 Et se nus hom pour nul afaire  
 En desfaisoit le serreure,  
 Ja ne trouverai trouvure,  
 Ne ne me kerrai mais en home.  
 Il est touz seus, c'en est li some:  
 Il n's ne per ne compaignon,  
 Ne ja n'avra se par lui non.

One would assume at least five years had elapsed since the accession of the young count before Gautier could admit, even in a literary *topos*, even purely as a sign of politeness and friendship, that he loves him more than any other prince in the world and that by him he has risen to such a high state.

Another argument in favor of *Eracle*'s composition after 1175 can be drawn from a remarkable chronological discovery by Cowper: Cowper noticed that in the festival episodes which provide the occasion for Athanais' adultery in the *Eracle* (lines 3386-4747), two succeeding Sunday festivals occur, followed closely by St. John's Day; these two holidays, reasoned Cowper, must be Pentecost and Trinity Sunday, and in the period we are discussing they occurred close to St. John's Day only in the years 1166 and 1177—it is an unprovable but not unlikely deduction that Gautier composed these episodes during one or the other of those two years.<sup>35</sup> Assuming this hypothesis to be true, the date 1166 coincides perfectly with our previous remarks concerning Baudouin IV; if Baudouin V, then the date of *Eracle* must be advanced to about 1177. We are left then again with two distinct and independent possibilities: Hypothesis I, an *Eracle* dedicated to Baudouin IV, in which case the two poems were composed during the periods 1165-1169 and 1170-1174; or Hypothesis II, an *Eracle* dedicated to Baudouin V, in which case the dates are approximately 1176-1180 and 1181-1184. Now the two hypotheses must be weighed one against the other.

The scholarly arguments against Hypothesis I seem to us quite unsubstantial. Sheldon's objection to the writing of *Ille* in the early years of the 1170's, during Barbarossa's preparations for a

<sup>35</sup> Cowper, "Gautier d'Arras and Provins," *Romanic Review*, XXII (1931), 291-300.

return to Italy,<sup>36</sup> appears unconvincing and gratuitous, since we are not sufficiently familiar with the Empress Beatrice's mental state to draw a conclusion one way or the other: the anxiety she felt because of her husband's political setbacks may not have been so great as to preclude having a romance written in her honor; or, if so, it may have been written expressly to cheer her up; or she may not have been anguished at all. We do not know.

Second, Heinermann's preference for Baudouin V over his father is also not based on impeccably solid grounds: the German scholar is undoubtedly correct in assigning little value to Foerster's interpretation of "dis et set anz et demi," a phrase which is undoubtedly just a literary cliché; but we believe that his objection to Baudouin IV on the ground of age is unfounded. The old count, retired from the campaigns, would be as entranced by a tale of love and war and crusade and would be as generous a patron of letters as his hot-blooded son twenty years old. Neither man has come down to us with the particular reputation of a *Maecenas*, and, until further evidence is uncovered, we must leave the question open.

Then, Heinermann also mentions in a note<sup>37</sup> Foerster's claimed analogy between the central episode in *Ille* (the hero's loss of an eye) and a similar situation in Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore*; the *Ille*, however, was not necessarily patterned after a problem taken directly from Andreas (who wrote long after), but rather from one floating about orally through all the French courts impregnated with the newly acquired Provençal love-ethos.

The final objection concerns the German savant's thesis of a rapport between the plot of *Ille* and Eleanor of Aquitaine's treatment by Henry II (cf. above, p. 186): but it seems quite evident to us that if there be any actuality involved in the tale of a beautiful queen who, tormented by her jealous husband, leaves him to marry a younger man, Louis VII and not Henry II is the husband referred to. Since these events occurred in 1152, Hypothesis I is not adversely affected in any way.

Our objections to the probability of Hypothesis II, however, are more serious. The crux of the problem lies in the nature of the rapport between Gautier and the Empress Beatrice. The prologue to *Ille* is a perfectly normal dedication, containing the usual *exordia-topoi*; its sole originality lies in two factors: the repeated and insistent mention of the coronation and Gautier's stated desire to do something for her at once in order to catch up with other admirers who had known her for a longer time:

63      Molt par me torne a grant anui  
           Quant ainc ma dame ne conui;  
           Or m'estuet sigler a plain tref  
           Par qals ateindre qui ains murent  
           Et qui ainc de moi le conurent.

<sup>36</sup> Sheldon, *loc. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Heinermann, p. 238.

From the lines cited above, it seems apparent that at some time Gautier visited the German court, met the Empress probably for the first time, and was commissioned or encouraged to write a novel in her honor. The most likely moment for such a trip is the period between 1161 and 1165, during which Gautier is never mentioned in Flemish texts and was presumably absent from the country, or, possibly, in 1167, the year of the coronation itself. It is unlikely that a man of his eminence in the court would not have made the acquaintance of his master's neighbor and lord (for certain fiefs) by 1170. But if he met Beatrice at this time, *Ille* must have been written not too long afterward: not only because the coronation is explicitly mentioned, and as intelligent an author as Gautier d'Arras would only cite an event well-known to all his readers, an event of actuality fresh in their minds, but also because, if Beatrice commissioned the poem, Gautier would be eager to execute it as soon as possible, and if his offer was gratuitous, then once again it would follow closely upon their meeting, so that his lines could still bear a reasonable connotation. An *Ille* composed after 1180 can meet none of these conditions.

Gautier's age leads us to the same conclusion. Our author is obviously an educated man—a solid training is necessary for his professional career, and his works are based on a wide variety of French and Latin texts.<sup>38</sup> Yet it seems likely that he did not go to school in the empty period between 1161 and 1165 because by then he was already of age, possessed fiefs, and acted in legal decisions, and medieval noblemen, in such a state of life, were not in the habit of suddenly abandoning their worldly interests to pursue a course of study. No, Gautier must have gone to school before he was able to take part in Philip's affairs, i.e., in the period from 1155 to 1160. In any case, he must have been born not long after 1135 at the very latest.

We may well ask if such a man, an active and respected jurist, "administrator" of the Count of Flanders, possessor of at least seventeen fiefs, will at the age of forty metamorphose into an author of romances and whether he will continue at this task until close to his death in 1185. Such a supposition is not impossible but highly unlikely, especially considering that the elderly Gautier had a full slate of administrative duties to perform (particularly during the period 1177-1178, when Philip was in the Holy Land) and also was to revise his second novel sometime before dying.<sup>39</sup> It is much

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Ferdinand Lot, "Une source historique d'*Ille et Galeron*," *Romania*, XXV (1896), 585-88; F. M. Warren, "A Byzantine Source for Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*," *PMLA*, XXXI (1916), 232-46; Edmond Faral, "D'un passionnaire latin à un roman français: Quelques sources immédiates du roman d'*Eracle*," *Romania*, XLVI (1920), 512-36; Ernest Hoepffner, "Le roman d'*Ille et Galeron* et le lai d'*Eliduc*," *Studies Presented to M. K. Pope* (1939), pp. 125-44.

<sup>39</sup> A comparison of the two manuscripts of *Ille et Galeron*, MSS P and W, indicates that they are not merely different copies of a unique parent text, but rather two distinct versions of the same novel, one which the author himself

more likely that *Eracle* and *Ille et Galeron* are the products of a youthful avocation, a penchant for romance, which, as the author grew older and more important in the world, gave way to more serious things.

Our final argument concerns the style of the two poems. Warren, Heinermann, and Voretzsch have all commented on the archaic features of *Eracle* and *Ille* and on their resemblance to the Old French epic, *Thèbes*, and *Enées*:

*Eracle*: Insofern hier Motive und Episoden verschiedener Herkunft und verschiedenen Charakters mehr oder minder lose aneinander gereiht werden, pflegt man Gautiers Roman auch als den ersten "Abenteuerroman" zu bezeichnen.

*Ille*: Trotzdem auch hier noch manche Einzelheiten an die Stilgebung der Chansons de Geste erinnern. . . .<sup>40</sup>

It is almost impossible that such works could have been written after 1175 when the novels of Chrétien had already achieved a large measure of fame and had displaced the *roman d'antiquité* as a model for both literary form and matter. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that Gautier, though Chrétien's contemporary, had, according to many eminent critics, more than a little influence on the *Cligès*.<sup>41</sup> Gautier was an experimenter, a pioneer in form—it was he who, as Voretzsch says, created the first *roman d'aventure* and bridged the gap between the antique and the courtly romance; and his *Eracle* had the same revolutionary effect as Chrétien's *Erec*, written at about the same time. Gautier d'Arras, the gifted amateur, wrote his two novels in the decade following 1165 and, in so doing, had a marked influence on his contemporary, the even more gifted professional of Troyes.

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revised during his lifetime. It would seem likely that W represents the later version, because it both clears up several ambiguities in the other text and also tempers the original adulation of Beatrice with equal praise of Thibaut.

<sup>40</sup> Voretzsch, pp. 268, 354.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. especially Voretzsch, p. 268; Maurice Wilmette, *L'Evolution du roman français aux environs de 1150* (Paris, 1905), pp. 15-48. That it is now the fashion to advance the years of Chrétien's active career up to the end of the twelfth century (cf. Anthime Fourrier, "Encore la chronologie des œuvres de Chrétien de Troyes," *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société internationale Arthurienne*, no. 2 [1950], pp. 69-88; and Jean Frappier, *Chrétien de Troyes: L'homme et l'œuvre* [Paris, 1957]) is of little import, since the matter is still quite delicate and far from being proved. P. Zumthor takes the most prudent course in his *Histoire littéraire*, pp. 195-97, by assigning to Chrétien a compromise dating, 1165 to 1180 or 1187, which harmonizes perfectly with our own hypotheses on Gautier. Cf. also William A. Nitze, *Perceval and the Holy Grail: An Essay on the Romance of Chrétien de Troyes*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, XXVIII (1949), 284-85.

## REVIEWS

*Textual and Literary Criticism.* By FREDSON BOWERS. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1959. Pp. ix + 186. \$3.75.

In January, 1958, Fredson Bowers of the University of Virginia delivered three lectures as Sandars Reader in Bibliography at Cambridge University, and on the day after the last of the three lectures he addressed the Bibliographical Society in London. This book presents those four lectures and supplements them with 36 pages of useful annotation. These notes are the more welcome in that they are not mere citations of sources and pages and dates but consist of helpful expansions of statements in the lectures, and it is indeed quite likely that readers of this book will get more out of the lectures than did those scholars who heard Bowers deliver them, for they did not have a printed text before their eyes.

Some of the quality of the public addresses does, however, come through on the printed pages, and one can sense the audience's reaction to Bowers' polite castigation of such worthies as J. Dover Wilson, Helge Kokeritz, John Crowe Ransom, and others, who have earned their spankings by their blithe indifference to (or ignoring of) the principles of textual study here carefully and precisely set forth by Fredson Bowers. Every scholar who takes himself and his work seriously should read, and reread, the warnings with which these pages are filled. The present reviewer shares with the author amazement at the sad fact that "it is still a current oddity that many a literary critic has investigated . . . the pedigree and training of his dog more thoroughly than he has looked into the qualifications of the text on which his critical theories rest" (p. 5).

Bowers' second lecture deals with his study of Walt Whitman's manuscripts of *Leaves of Grass*. In this chapter there is pleasant personal note of joy in the chase which will delight every literary worker who has found similar pleasure in his own research; but the thirty pages devoted to Whitman, however useful they may have been in bringing light to an English audience, will not advance the American reader who is already familiar with *Whitman's Manuscripts* which Bowers had published four years earlier. They give the author a fresh opportunity, however, to administer to William Carlos Williams a well-deserved rebuke for his "romantic concept" (i.e., irresponsible assertion) which Bowers clearly shows "to be quite misleading."

The present reviewer found the pages devoted to Shakespeare the most rewarding in this volume—not because he prefers the Warwick warbling of native woodnotes wild to the barbaric yawps from Mannahatta (though he does confess to that preference), but because the Shakespearean part of this book, particularly the third chapter, deals with fresh material, some of it as yet unpublished. Although Bowers warns his readers that some of his illustrations "may become obsolete in some respects before this book is published," every scholar interested in Shakespeare will find excitement in the glimpses here afforded into a number of recent minute studies of the printer's type used in the First Folio.

Pages 187 and 188 are left blank. They might have been profitably used to provide an index, for in a book of this sort an index is badly needed. Bowers deals with more than a score of authors, from Addison, Beaumont, Cabell, and

Dekker, down to Shelley, Whitman, and Yeats; and he makes use of the findings of more than two-score editors, critics, and bibliographers, from Alexander, Bearne, Christopherson, and Empson, through Hinman, Kokeritz, Lachmann, and Schaaber, down to Walker, Williams (two of them), Wilson, and Wyld; but if any reader of this book should wish to turn later to what Bowers has to say about any of these dozens and dozens of persons, he will have to make his own index. It seems to the present reviewer that British books are often much more negligent in this respect than are scholarly books produced in America.

The present volume has been beautifully printed by Brooke Crutchley, Cambridge University Printer, and in a format which is a delight to the reader. When the book goes to a second printing (as it well deserves to), there are very few errors to be corrected. On page 76 (line 28), for *attempts . . . has* read *attempts . . . have* (or *attempt . . . has*); on page 158 (line 20), for *present* read *parent*; and on page 162 (in the note to page 19), for *Babbit* read *Babbitt*.

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*The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray.* By JEAN H. HAGSTRUM. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. Pp. xxii + 337. 32 plates. \$7.50.

This is a beautifully planned and executed work of scholarship, which will be of the greatest value both to the general student interested in the relations between poetry and the fine arts and to the special student of English neoclassical poetry. In a skillfully graduated approach, more than one-third of the space is given to the pictorial tradition in literature and literary criticism before the eighteenth century. Hagstrum is careful to establish the continuity of this tradition, which concerns not merely visual but pictorial elements, that is, elements imaginable as painting or sculpture, with a subordination of motion and abstract ideas to *visibilia*. The influence he is concerned with is from the pictorial to the literary. He keeps clear of *Geistesgeschichte*, the quest in a given period for a common spirit expressing itself both in literature and the fine arts, and thus avoids random analogies and elusive generalizations. Considering the vast field covered here, we cannot help but be struck by the coherence and close texture of the entire study.

The introductory survey keeps artistic practice and critical theory in nice balance, and organizes the historical account of the connection between literature and art largely around the conception of "iconic poetry," in which "the poet contemplates a real or imaginary work of art that he describes or responds to in some way" (p. 17). Familiar though this kind of writing is, it is significant that Hagstrum has had to coin a name for it. In critical theory, the well-ordered presentation of such themes as naturalistic imitation, the long-continued currency of the obiter dicta of Simonides and Horace, and the concept of *enargeia* ("pictorial vividness") furnishes an indispensable introduction to the later chapters. Despite the chronological sweep, from Homer down, the discussion of pictorialism in the poets and the writers of iconic prose is never perfunctory. Whether it be Philostratus, Chaucer, Dante, Spenser, Milton, or Herbert, we feel that we are getting a fresh appraisal. The range of reference is striking and stimulating; for example, the connection of the Eliot-Pound dictum about sensuous thought with the poetry-painting equivalence in Marino (pp. 94-95).

Without a break in continuity, Part Two centers on the cultural background and the artistic achievements of the major English poets from Dryden to Gray. Of great importance here are the popularity of the later Italian painters in England (notably the Carracci, Guido Reni, Domenichino, Nicolas Poussin), the combination of naturalistic pictorialism (*enargeia*) with the conveying of "sophisticated moral and psychological truth" (p. 123), or, as in Addison's "Pleasures of the Imagination," with the situating of aesthetic value in the mind of man (pp. 136-37), and the ideal of general nature, especially as exemplified in ancient statuary. Important corrections of certain views are offered—the erroneous identification of neoclassical pictorialism with the mere use of excessive ornament and color (Babbitt), the exaggeration of the merely enumerative and static elements in traditional pictorialism (Lessing), undue emphasis on the special picturesque tradition of Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa (Miss Manwaring). At the same time Hagstrum's findings fall in with and supplement several recent and valuable studies of neoclassical diction, imagery, and personification.

In a series of brilliant analyses of individual poems, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Collins, and Gray are all firmly placed in the pictorial tradition. The ground has been prepared so thoroughly that the reader, or at least one reader, is almost never inclined to withhold assent. Quite exceptionally, I do not find the treatment of *Absalom and Achitophel* as a gallery piece, or the emphasis on the Choice of Hercules theme in *All for Love*, particularly compelling. But time and again Hagstrum throws new light on familiar poems that have long been subjected to close analysis. He has found the key, for example, to "The Temple of Fame" and "Eloisa to Abelard." Space fails for adequate illustration, but it may be said that the central importance of the allegorical persona in Thomson's landscapes (or at least in some of his most important landscapes) is here brought out for the first time. The new readings of Collins' odes and of Gray's most important poems will henceforth be indispensable. The interesting group of illustrations is used with fine judgment and discretion. Hagstrum is conservative in offering parallels between poems and individual pictures; when he does use such parallels, he is extremely effective. For example, his identification of the influence of Guido Reni's "Aurora" on Thomson's *Summer*, lines 113-29, carries conviction, and his *rapprochement* of the conclusion of Gray's "Elegy" with Poussin's "Shepherds of Arcady" is an extraordinarily brilliant stroke.

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*Oliver Goldsmith*. By RALPH M. WARDLE. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1957. Pp. 330. \$5.00.

"Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man," remarked Dr. Johnson on the death of his friend whom Ralph M. Wardle, in this century's first scholarly biography of Goldsmith, calls "the most versatile genius of all English literature." In spite of Johnson's injunction, successive biographers have preferred to follow Goldsmith's own precedent in his *Life of Nash* and in his *Memoir of Voltaire*, of which he wrote, "truth only is my aim." This attitude toward biography actually had Johnson's approval, expressed in a *Rambler* essay and later practiced in his *Lives of the Poets*.

Wardle's similar devotion to truth necessarily results in the preservation of

Goldsmith's frailties, which continue to be the most memorable portion of any biography of this enigmatic personality. Yet, rather than share the amusement his contemporaries found in his uncomely physiognomy or their scorn for his origin "at a time when Irishmen were regarded as little better than savages," we, more than ever, recognize through this sympathetic portrayal that the faults were often those of imprudence and omission and that others, such as his "inordinate generosity," are virtues misconstrued. The "many disappointments, many frustrations" in his life produced a reaction that reminds us of Boswell. At thirty,

he was as wanting in discipline as when he had been sixteen. And his lack of discipline stemmed from that basic lack of self-confidence which . . . Goldsmith would never gain, and he would always astonish and antagonize people by his efforts to compensate for the want of it.

His "chronic improvidence" furnishes one of the main themes of this biography: his problem "of keeping his expenses within his income." Other faults are duly enumerated: lying, plagiarizing, gambling, borrowing, envying, drinking—all to excess. Some charges are authenticated; others, such as the statement that he "probably was no chaster than most gentlemen of his era," tend to contradict what is said elsewhere: "Indeed the whole question of Goldsmith's relationships with women is vague . . . there is no proof that he ever took more than a passing interest in women."

Wardle does not pretend to alter the familiar picture, nor does he offer any previously undiscovered Goldsmith manuscripts. Rather, this fresh appraisal evaluates additional records, such as the Boswell papers, and the scholarship that has appeared since Austin Dobson's biography of 1888. Carefully documented use of such material, judicious selections from the correspondence, and a thorough reading of the *History of the Earth and Animated Nature* and the *Chinese Letters*, which incorporate autobiographical experiences and "thinking about matters of a rather personal nature," are managed so that Goldsmith emerges as "a patient, kindly teacher," "a well-read, well-traveled bachelor," "a lover of nature,"

sympathetic not only with his reader but with mankind and animals—especially the poor and oppressed among men and the hunted among animals. Moreover, he is a devout Christian, with a strong conviction that Providence has ordained all for the best, and that men—especially Englishmen, who are singularly blessed—should accept their lot contentedly.

Perhaps this attitude, if correctly judged, explains why "He was keenly aware of his faults, yet constitutionally unable to correct them." In any case, far from being an "inspired idiot," an easy assumption that still persists, he is characterized as "a conscious artist, at odds with the spirit of his times," anticipating "in general spirit, the attitudes of the Romantic Revival. . . ."

The constant repetition of such words as "perhaps" and "probably" indicates little progress in dispelling the uncertainty that has always existed about much of Goldsmith's life. No additional light is shed, for example, on where, or even whether, he acquired a medical degree or how he managed to finance his European tour of 1755. On the other hand, Wardle has completely detailed Goldsmith's "active social life."

One of the significant features of this biography is Wardle's accumulation of evidence for a convincing explanation of Goldsmith's productivity and versatility. Heavy reliance on his well-stocked library for passages lifted verbatim, condensed, or translated for use in his *History*, his *Chinese Letters*, and even

his poetry shows that "in his writing, as in his life, he often followed the line of least resistance." At the same time, Wardle indicates that Goldsmith simply did not consider strict originality necessary, especially for a compilation. He suggests that this activity reveals an unusual ability to grasp a subject and condense, extract, or select in order to present it in useful form.

The author's critical evaluations of Goldsmith's works as they are progressively encountered are especially noteworthy. Summaries remind the reader of the content and tone of the more familiar works and acquaint him with those less well known. In such manner is the biography made more revealing, not only for the general reader but for the period specialist as well. In spite of the obscurities and the frailties, both will recognize the virtues of "a good-natured man."

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*Goethe's Faust: A Literary Analysis.* By STUART ATKINS. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. Pp. xi + 290. \$6.00.

*Faust* criticism, more than that of almost any other literary work, has from its very start been misdirected toward a sometimes petty, sometimes over-scholarly biographical bias. This is not the fault of Goethe, who was sparing indeed in his remarks on the work; rather, it is the fault of the hero worship which, in its awe of the great man, disregarded the greatness of his works. Because of Goethe's bold, often extremely modern concept of form, his admirers, who too rarely understood his revolutionary work, actually felt compelled to defend Goethe's unorthodox tastes; and they thought they could do so only by referring to the long and involved biographical history of its inception.

Only recently have a few critics had the courage to throw the weight of 150 years of *Faust* criticism off their shoulders so that they might look at the work afresh and without prejudice. Of these critics Stuart Atkins is by far the most important, consistent, and refreshingly unconventional. To be sure, he is influenced, as we all are, by New Criticism, i.e., he considers *Faust* (Parts I and II together) as a unified work, a great work, and one that is worthy of a long aesthetic analysis. His subtitle, "A Literary Analysis," clearly indicates this intention. He provides a running commentary to *Faust*, and his main concern is with its essential literary quality. He omits biographical data in favor of literary observations; he has few footnotes and no bibliography.

Stuart Atkins understands fully the aesthetic innovations of Goethe's *Faust*: a new idea of unity conceived by Goethe which consists of the repetition of rhythms, images, themes—a unity created with utmost care and admirable skill. Atkins rightly emphasizes the symbolic quality of many of Goethe's intricate rhythms and rhymes and follows up the themes touched upon in the *Prelude on the Stage* and the *Prologue in Heaven* and echoed throughout the work. He visualizes the symbolic significance of "God," "sun," "light," "day," "clarity" (p. 22), and the like, and shows the intricate pattern in which they are used. In other words, he has finally—and I think irrevocably—shown that Goethe's *Faust* stands among the great works of world literature not only because of its interesting hero and its provocative philosophy, but also, as a great work should, because of its consistent, intricate, and unique literary form.

Stuart Atkins' erudition places his book far above any narrow "literary" analysis, putting it in some respects in the frame of the history of ideas. This

is as it should be. The great learning of Goethe, the innumerable allusions to older works, including many hardly recognizable references to the Bible, need to be clarified for the reader. Atkins' extensive knowledge of the Bible as well as of ancient texts has raised his literary analysis to the level of Goethe's own profound familiarity with world literature. Like the *Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, or *Ulysses*, Goethe's *Faust* is imbued with learned references which have become part and parcel of the artistic creation. To ignore them would be fatal to an understanding of the work. To insert their explanations so modestly and unobtrusively into the bulk of his book is Atkins' peculiar merit. In his incidental manner he presents us with information about a great many sources of Goethe's work hitherto disregarded or unknown.

One of the principal weaknesses in *Faust* criticism has been its overemphasis on the philosophy of the work. Convinced that its dramatic nature has not been sufficiently recognized, Atkins visualizes all characters as dramatic and sees in them the embodiment of life-forces. *Faust* is a play, Atkins argues, and its dialectic is essentially that of a play—not that of a philosophical debate. He could not be more right.

It is impossible to discuss here all the original interpretations Atkins offers. One of the most noteworthy is that (Chaps. XVII-XXI) which explains the Classical Walpurgisnacht as a dream and the Helen Episode as a dream within a dream. In an ingenious, but entirely plausible manner this idea is introduced earlier when, according to Atkins' interpretation, Mephistopheles invents the realm of the mothers. The "Realms of the Creating Imagination" are thus created by both Faust and the Devil, and they are brought into sharp contrast to the "real" world of the imperial court. This idea is intriguing and, on closer examination, gains in perspective.

The least revolutionary interpretation of the book concerns the hero himself. The reader still gets the impression that Faust is a superman rather than an erring, faltering human being who fumbles and fails. Faust's striving, which to the modern reader seems such a doubtful activity, is taken somewhat too uncritically for granted. But this acceptance of the usual in an otherwise so boldly original book is probably not a flaw. Atkins' great emphasis on the artistic qualities of the work, never before so richly and sensitively developed, was a much more urgent task than a reinterpretation of the hero could have been. We needed the literary analysis which we would never have gained in another study of the hero himself.

Stuart Atkins' book is not easy or smooth reading. His style is involved and complex, his ability to convey his learning impressive. His "Literary Analysis" is indispensable for anyone who wants to understand Goethe's *Faust*. It stands out among the few great books written on *Faust*, and, as the latest commentary, it replaces many of the previous works.

LISELOTTE DIECKMANN

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*German Baroque Literature: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Yale University Library.* By CURT VON FABER DU FAUR. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958. Pp. xlvi + 496. \$15.00.

The appearance of this catalogue is an event of great importance to Germanistic scholarship in this country, for the Yale Collection of German Baroque literature is one of the most important of its kind in the world; and while other

such collections remain far off and relatively inaccessible, this catalogue makes the Yale Collection, to a certain extent at least, available to the ever-growing number of friends of the German Baroque era. Fortunately, the curator, Curt von Faber du Faur, has done more than enumerate his holdings. For the benefit of American students, scholars, and librarians he has written a 26-page general introduction; he has divided the field into 23 convenient sections and provided each with a special introduction; beyond that, subdivisions and even individual authors receive additional remarks. Thus order emerges, and even the specialist will derive benefit and pleasure from the author's ever-enthusiastic and knowing guidance.

Avoiding extremes, Faber du Faur begins the era with the musician-poets Regnart, di Lasso, and Schein and ends it halfway through the eighteenth century, approximately with Gottsched. A certain arbitrariness of the divisions could not be avoided; e.g., all of Gryphius' works are grouped under Drama, while all of Zesen's are to be found under Courtly Romance. There is precedent for such grouping, and by and large the arrangement is workable, especially since several good indexes are appended.

The Yale Collection as such came into existence when Faber du Faur in 1944 integrated his own collection, the fruit of thirty-odd years of collecting, with the holdings of the Yale University Library. With constant accessions since, the Collection has become astoundingly rich and representative. It is particularly strong in the works of Grimmelshausen, the Peggitz Shepherds, Catholic writers like Abraham a Sancta Clara, Drexel, Gretser, *et al.*; the courtly novel is well represented, as are Rist and Moschersoch. Of course, there still are some weak spots, and no one knows them better than the curator himself. (A rather detailed, illustrated report on the Collection by Faber du Faur appeared in the March, 1958, number of *Philobiblion* [Hamburg], pp. 8-26.)

Having strongly acknowledged the over-all importance and value of the catalogue, I feel quite apologetic about voicing some criticism. Though the title of the work clearly states that we are dealing with a catalogue, not a bibliography, nevertheless, because of the nature of the material treated and the lack of a comprehensive bibliography which satisfies modern standards, bibliographical demands will be made on this catalogue. In the transcriptions of the titles words are omitted in the interest of brevity; the use of upper-case letters is not preserved; the three kinds of type are normalized as italic throughout; inking in variant color is not marked; dates in roman are given in arabic; the use of *u* for *v* is normalized; and the Esszet ligature is resolved as *ss*. Some of these matters were determined by conformance to other Yale catalogues; the Esszet matter is an irony of fate: the manuscript was prepared for an American printer who decided to have the composition and printing done in Germany!

Aside from the above general exceptions, which are explained in the Preface, the transcriptions are satisfactory. Let us compare, however, the reproduction of the title page of No. 219 with the transcription on p. 63: the transcription supplies a period after MART and silently corrects an instance of depressed type: IBER, in line 5; the dot over I in SILVARVM, line 2 is obviously inked in. But what of the two dots after MC in the last printed line? The comparison shows the unreliability of reproductions and the desirability of "ideal copy" descriptions.

The notes reliably and regularly furnish standard information on pagination or foliation, size to within .5 cm, illustrations, binding, and so on. Goedekte references appear where available, and special bibliographies have been utilized. In

the case of Opitz, the omission of Szyrocki (or Oesterley) numbers is not too much of a loss, but Witkowski's explanation of the different Opitz collections in the 1902 *Neudruck* might have been mentioned. Beyond the expected information, the notes frequently contain a wealth of biographical, literary, historical, and incidental information. This endowment, representing a tremendous labor of love and scholarship on the part of Curt von Faber du Faur, will be amply repaid by a better understanding and deepened appreciation of the German literary Baroque.

The translator was, unfortunately, out of his depth in Englishing Faber du Faur's colorful German style and a fair number of bibliographical terms. But verbal and stylistic infelicities, though they are many, cannot affect the intrinsic value of the catalogue.

As references to this work are already beginning to appear, our research libraries had better keep it handy on the open shelf.

G. SCHULZ-BEHREND

*University of Texas*

*Shaftesbury and the French Deists.* By DOROTHY B. SCHLEGEL. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, No. 15, 1956. Pp. 143. \$4.75.

Shaftesbury has long enjoyed great prestige in England and on the Continent, and this from several points of view. He has been hailed as an aesthetic forerunner of romanticism, a philosophical opponent of Hobbes and of Locke, an ardent defender of enthusiasm, and one of the leaders of the movement toward deism. It is with this latter phase that the author of this book is chiefly concerned. She has concentrated her attention on four French writers of the eighteenth century: Voltaire, Diderot, d'Holbach, and Rousseau. Each of these men, quite naturally, reacted in some degree differently to the impact of Shaftesbury's thought.

The author has undoubtedly selected a broad subject. Merely to acquire an intimate knowledge of Shaftesbury and of these four voluminous French authors, three of them at least of major importance, is in itself no small task. The book contains many interesting parallels and insights.

Voltaire frequently mentions Shaftesbury by name. In his Ferney library, there was a copy of *The Characteristicks* in three volumes, which has since disappeared from the collection at Leningrad.<sup>1</sup> It may be further noted that he also bought a copy as late as 1760 to send to his Italian friend, Marquis Albergati Capacelli (Moland, XL, 471 [July 21, 1760]). In his *Lettres philosophiques*, according to Mrs. Schlegel (p. 13), Voltaire attributes to Shaftesbury the essential background of Pope's *Essay on Man*. Using the composite text of Moland, however, and not the critical edition of Lanson, she appears not to have noticed that this remark, somewhat derogatory in intention, was not found in the original edition of 1734, but was added years later when Voltaire's attitude toward optimism had already changed considerably.<sup>2</sup> This is an indication of the importance of using critical editions whenever they are available. On the question as to whether Shaftesbury did, or did not, exert direct influence on

<sup>1</sup> Cf. George R. Havens and Norman L. Torrey, "Voltaire's Books: A Selected List," *Modern Philology*, XXVII (1929), 17, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Gustave Lanson, *Voltaire: Lettres philosophiques*, 2<sup>e</sup> édition (Paris, 1915-1917), II, 139 n.

Pope's famous work, R. L. Brett has some judicious remarks which underline the complexity of the subject.<sup>3</sup> In Voltaire's final bitter hostility toward the philosophy of optimism, he turned savagely upon Shaftesbury, exclaiming: "Ceux qui ont crié que tout est bien sont des charlatans. Shaftesbury, qui mit ce conte à la mode, était un homme très-malheureux" (Moland, XXVIII, 535). And the indictment here goes on to include Bolingbroke and Pope as well.

Diderot, in his turn, evolves from the at least outward approval of deism noted in his early French adaptation of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* in 1745, to a final incredulity which pushes the English author completely aside. D'Holbach shows himself from the beginning in harmony largely with the negative aspects of Shaftesbury's Biblical and religious criticism. In the end, his mechanistic philosophy appeared "so gray, so Cimmerian, so corpse-like," to borrow Mrs. Schlegel's appropriate quotation from Goethe (p. 98), that the public gradually reacted in the direction of a new enthusiasm, that of romanticism.

"With Rousseau," Mrs. Schlegel writes, "the influence of Shaftesbury stretched across the century and implanted in the minds of the common people a humanitarianism which led to revolution, an emotionalism which became sentimentality, and an individualism which grew into an overweening personal and national egoism" (p. 99). But surely this all-embracing sentence claims too much. The reader can hardly escape the fear that the author, throughout this interesting study, has fallen into a dangerous preoccupation with the single source. Not everything in the eighteenth century came from Shaftesbury! Certainly, Mrs. Schlegel does not think that it does, yet the implication is there. A safer guide to the complex origins of Rousseau's thought is undoubtedly Pierre-Maurice Masson.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout Mrs. Schlegel's work, there too often appears a tendency to regard a parallel as an evidence of influence. She observes: "Voltaire, like Shaftesbury, considers priests as tantamount to crafty magicians, who live off the credulity of the people" (p. 15). But, aside from the many varied influences which were pushing Voltaire in that direction during the early years of the eighteenth century, can we ignore the importance, in France and outside of France, of Fontenelle's widely read *Histoire des oracles* which was published in 1686?

Mrs. Schlegel states: "Shaftesbury's recommendation of the dialogue for polemic writing may have inspired Voltaire to use that time-honored form in his later diatribes against revealed religion" (pp. 31-32). The sentence is cautiously worded, but again Fontenelle's dialogues, succeeding those of Lucian, would appear to be a much more convincing source than Shaftesbury, if indeed any particular source needs to be singled out in a century famous for salon conversation and the dialogue. And there is yet one more example from among the several that might be selected. Mrs. Schlegel says of Rousseau's Englishman in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*: "Just as Shaftesbury had traveled in Italy, so did Rousseau's Lord Bomston" (p. 102). But why should we imply credit here to Shaftesbury for the "Grand Tour" which had so long been traditional for young Englishmen of wealth journeying on the Continent?

It is unfortunate that the citations from the French are not always textually accurate. For example, on page 14, we should read *peines* for *épines*,

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Brett, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury* (London, 1951), pp. 190-95.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre-Maurice Masson, *La religion de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris, 1916), 3 vols., and particularly Vol. I.

*jusqu'au lord Shaftesbury* instead of *jusqu'à*, and *des idées différentes* for *les idées différentes*. Other instances could be cited (see, for example, pp. 27, 31, 42, 57, 63, 69, and 75).

The errors of method and of detail, which have been mentioned above, spring, no doubt, largely from the broad scope of the subject. It would seem better, for the purposes of a preliminary study, to have concentrated on a single author in his possible relation to Shaftesbury, considering the latter only as one important element in the whole complex background of eighteenth-century ideas. In the realm of source study, as has been well said,<sup>5</sup> it is sound doctrine to accept the idea of direct influence only when all other possible explanations prove invalid. This, we well know, is exactly the reverse of the procedure too often followed.

In spite of the interest of Mrs. Schlegel's book, the reader should accept her conclusions with a degree of prudent reserve. It is to be hoped, however, that the author will now find time and inclination to use her considerable knowledge of this broad subject to probe more deeply into its many complexities, which still call for further enlightenment.

GEORGE R. HAVENS

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. John Wilcox, *The Relation of Molière to Restoration Comedy* (New York, 1938), Chap. II, pp. 18-34. This chapter presents an unusually succinct and judicious statement of the nature and limitations of source study.

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CORRECTION

The reviewer of *Die deutsche Sprache im Ausland* (March, 1959, pp. 107-109) requests to have corrected the figure of Chinese-speaking people from 450 million to 650 million.

EDWARD G. COX

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